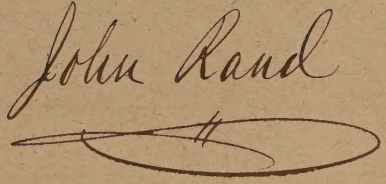
FRO

Edward Rand.


John Rand

LIFE

OF

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

VOL. I.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/lifeofgouverneur0001jare

2782.7.1

THE

LIFE

OF

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, ...

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS;

DETAILING EVENTS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

BY JARED SPARKS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY GRAY & BOWEN.

1832.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1831, by GRAY AND BOWEN,
in the Clerk's office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

BOSTON:
Waitt & Dow's Power Press

PREFACE.

The materials for this work have been derived from various sources, but chiefly from the manuscripts left by Gouverneur Morris at Morrisania, and furnished by his widow, Mrs Anne C. Morris. I have been indebted, for several interesting particulars in the memoir, to the politeness of General Morgan Lewis, Dr David Hosack, and M. Leray de Chaumont, who were intimately acquainted with Mr Morris at different periods of his life. Acknowledgments are due, also, to the Secretary of the State of New York, who very obligingly opened to my inspection the archives in his office, from which some important facts were obtained respecting Mr Morris's early political services.

In its general arrangement the work is divided into two parts, the first containing a biographical sketch, and the other a selection of letters and miscellaneous articles. During the American Revolution, and indeed down to the time of his departure for Europe, he gave little attention to his papers, but from that date to the end of his life they were preserved with remarkable care. It would seem, that every important letter was copied into his letter books. Within this space, his published correspondence affords so complete an account of his life and opinions, that it has been thought best to allot a large portion of the memoir to earlier events. Previous researches had furnished me with copious materials, from which collater-

al facts have occasionally been drawn, with the view of supplying the deficiencies in his papers, and illustrating some of the less familiar parts of our revolutionary history, in which he was a prominent actor.

While Mr Morris resided in Europe he kept a Diary, which affords much curious matter, particularly respecting the Revolution in France, and extracts from which have been woven into the narrative in such proportions, as the limits of the work would admit.

The letters and other papers, selected for publication in these volumes, have been transcribed from the original manuscripts, none of them having before been printed, except the speeches in the Senate of the United States, the Essay on the Bank of North America, and perhaps half a dozen letters. The correspondence with Washington, which was continued for many years, is probably the most valuable part of the collection. Washington's own letters are printed from the originals, which, in every instance, exist in the handwriting of the author.

It has not been my aim to write a panegyric, to conceal defects, or emblazon good qualities, but rather to present traits of character, acts, and opinions, in their genuine light and just bearings, and leave them to make their proper impressions. Such is doubtless the legitimate purpose of biography. Indiscriminate eulogy is seldom sincere, never true, contributing little to accurate history, or to the stock of valuable knowledge either of men or things.

CONTENTS

OF THE

FIRST VOLUME

CHAPTER I.

The Morris Family in America.—Birth and education of Gouverneur Morris.—His College Orations.—Studies law with William Smith, the Historian of New York.—Writes on the Finance of the Colony.—Practises law.—Meditates a visit to Europe.—First movements in New York concerning the aggressions of England.—Mr Morris's views of that subject. - 1

CHAPTER II.

Political state of the American Colonies at the opening of the Revolution.—Organization of the first forms of Government.—Committees of the people.—First Provincial Convention and Congress of New York.—Modes of election.—Part taken by Mr Morris in the first Congress.—Aspect of political opinions in the Congress and in the Colony.—Means of raising money.—Mr Morris's plan. - - - - - - 28

CHAPTER III.

Indian disturbances on the frontiers.—Guy Johnson's letter and the reply of the Congress.—Intercepted correspondence of General Gage.—Preparations for military defence.—Project of the Congress for a conciliation with England.—Mr Morris's modification.—Burke's correspondence with the Assembly of New York.—Ceremony on the occasion of General Washington's passing through New York to take command of the army. - - - - - - - - 41

CHAPTER IV.

Ticonderoga.—Ethan Allen.—State of affairs on Lake Champlain.—Visit of Allen and Warner to the Continental Congress and the Congress of New York.—Authorized to raise a regiment of Green Mountain Boys.—Emission of money by New York.—General Wooster marches his forces to Haerlem.—Committee of Safety.—Its organization and powers.—Unpopular measure of attempting to seize the arms of disaffected persons.—Affair with the armed ship Asia, in the harbor of New York.—Captain Sears.—Destruction of Rivington's printing presses.—Excitement occasioned by that adventure. - - 53

CHAPTER V.

Administration of Justice.—Delegates to the Continental Congress.—Pay of Members in that body.—Apprehensions of an attack on New York.—General Charles Lee takes command there.—Preparations for defence.—General Lee's correspondence with Washington.—Power of arresting Tories.—Lord Stirling takes command in New York.—Washington's arrival there. - - - - - - - 69

CHAPTER VI.

Proceedings for organizing a new Government in New York.—Mr Morris's views of the subject.—Mr Jay's Resolutions.—Mr Morris's Speech in favor of Independence.—His mission to the Continental Congress.—Declaration of Independence adopted in New York.—Committee appointed to draft a Constitution. 88

CHAPTER VII.

Regulations respecting Tories.—Draft of a Constitution reported to the Convention.—Debated in Convention.—Council of Appointment.—Views of Jay, Morris, and Livingston.—Council of Revision.—Toleration.—Slavery.—Constitution adopted. - - 115

CHAPTER VIII.

Plan for organizing the New Government.—Governor Clinton.—Alarms at the evacuation of Ticonderoga.—Mr Morris visits General Schuyler's Head Quarters.—His letters to the Convention.—Appointed on a Committee to meet Delegates from the New England States at Springfield.—Monopoly and regulation of prices.—Mr Morris and Mr Jay visit General Washington's Head Quarters

as a Committee from the Convention.—Curious interview of General Gates with Congress.—General Schuyler.—Mr Morris's correspondence with him. - - - - - - 128

CHAPTER IX.

Mr Morris chosen a Delegate to the Continental Congress from New York.—Takes his seat.—Passes the winter at Valley Forge on a Committee from Congress.—His intimacy with Washington.—Arrangements of the army.—He draws up a paper for Congress on the state of Public Affairs.—Debates in Congress on a provision for half pay to the officers.—Correspondence with Mr Jay.—Letter from Dr Shippen. - - - - - - 149

CHAPTER X.

Mr Morris's Correspondence with General Washington.—Conway's intrigues.—General Lafayette.—Foreign officers in the service of the United States.—Petition of the American officers.—General Greene. - - - - - - - - 163

CHAPTER XI.

Lord North's Conciliatory Propositions.—Proceedings of Congress on that subject.—British Commissioners.—Mr Morris takes a leading part in the transactions respecting them.—Prepares the instructions to Dr Franklin.—Interview and conversation with the French Minister.—Western boundaries.—Finances of America.—Canada Expedition.—Washington's arrangements for the next campaign. - - - - - - - - - - 182

CHAPTER XII.

Debates in Congress on the terms of peace.—Mr Morris drafts the instructions on the subject.—Silas Deane.—Thomas Paine.—Mr Morris's Speech in the affair of Paine.—Treaties with Foreign Powers. - - - - - - - - 195

CHAPTER XIII.

Controversy between New York and Vermont.—Views of Clinton, Morris, and Hamilton on that subject.—Mr Morris retires from Congress.—Valuable papers written by him on American Currency and Finance.—Accident occasioning the loss of his leg.—Spain and the United States. - - - - - 208

CHAPTER XIV.

Organization of Executive Departments in Congress.—Robert R. Livingston.—Robert Morris, at the head of the Finance Department.—Gouverneur Morris Assistant Financier.—Bank of North America.—New instructions for negotiating peace.—Mr Morris's opinions respecting them.—First Secretary of War.—M. Rendon. 227

CHAPTER XV.

Mr Morris and General Knox Commissioners for exchange of prisoners.—France and the United States.—Count Vergennes.—Correspondence between Mr Morris and General Greene.—Newburgh Letters.—Close of the War.—British commercial restrictions.—Trade between the United States and French West India Islands. 242

CHAPTER XVI.

Mr Morris visits Morrisania after the peace.—Illumination in Philadelphia.—His arguments for the Bank of North America.—Condition of the Tories.—Commercial restrictions.—M. de Chastellux.—Pamphlet on the Bank.—Mr Morris's plan of a new Coinage.—Purchases the estate at Morrisania. - - - 264

CHAPTER XVII.

Convention for forming the Constitution of the United States.—Mr Morris's opinions in that body.—Mr Madison's letter.—Hamilton.—Mr Morris visits Virginia.—Prepares to depart for Europe.—Washington. - - - - - - - 282

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr Morris sails for Europe.—Arrives in Paris.—Lafayette.—Jefferson.—Mr Morris's Diary.—Extracts concerning events of the French Revolution.—Madame de Chastellux.—Dutchess of Orleans.—Maréchal de Castries.—Necker.—Ceremony of opening the States-General.—Ségur.—The Bishop d'Autun.—Montmorin.—Madame de Staël.—Letter to Lafayette on a new Ministry.—Affair of Favras.—Mr Morris's Note to the Queen. - - - 293

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr Morris is commissioned by Washington on a secret agency to the British Government.—His negotiation.—Duke of Leeds.—Mr Pitt.—

Tour up the Rhine.—Selections from the Diary narrating events in Paris.—Mr Morris's multiplicity of affairs in Europe.—Death of Mirabeau.—Mr Morris visits the Dutchess of Orleans at Eu.—He writes a Mémoire for the King, and the draft of a speech designed to be pronounced by the King to the National Assembly. 339

CHAPTER XX.

Mr Morris appointed Minister from the United States to the Court of France.—Presented to the King.—Aids in concerting a secret plan for the removal of the King and Royal Family from France.—Bertrand de Molleville.—Monciel.—The King deposits money in the hands of Mr Morris.—Dutchess of Orleans. - - 367

CHAPTER XXI.

Negotiation for paying a part of the French debt.—Doubts raised in this respect by the change of Government.—Differences with the French Ministers.—Mr Morris demands his passport, and threatens to leave Paris.—Capture of Lafayette.—Views of the American Ministers at London, Paris, and the Hague, as to their authority to demand his release.—Imprisonment of Madame de Lafayette in Paris.—Disagreeable situation of Mr Morris, as Minister in Paris.—Retires into the country.—His various official acts and duties.—Imprisonment of Thomas Paine at the Luxembourg, and Mr Morris's attempt to procure his release.—Mr Morris's recall. - - 387

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr Monroe.—Mr Morris leaves France.—Travels in Switzerland.—Visits M. Necker and Madame de Staël.—Basle.—Schaffhausen.—Passes through Germany to Hamburg.—Resides at Altona.—Travels in Holstein.—Arrives in London.—Interview with Lord Grenville.—Count Woronzow.—Mr Pitt.—Travels in England and Scotland.—Bishop of Landaff.—Conversation with the King.—Returns to the Continent.—Visits Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna.—Sir Morton Eden. - - - - - - - 420

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mr Morris's attempt in Vienna to procure the liberation of Lafayette.—Correspondence with Madame de Staël on that subject.—Interview with the Austrian Minister.—Letter to Madame de Lafayette.—Royal Princess of France.—Austrian Nobility.—Leaves Vienna for Berlin.—Conversation with the King of Prussia.—Residence

in Brunswick.—Returns to Altona.—Lafayette's release from Olmutz.—Given up to the American Consul at Hamburg, in presence of Mr Morris. - - - - - 439

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mr Morris commences another tour to the South of Germany.—Francfort, Ratisbon, Munich.—Count Rumford.—Mr Morris returns to Altona.—Duke of Orleans.—His concealment in Switzerland.—Letters from the Countess de Flahaut to Mr Morris concerning him.—They travel together to Hamburg.—The Duke's travels in Norway and Sweden.—His correspondence with Mr Morris.—His visit to the United States. - - - - - 459

CHAPTER XXV.

Mr Morris's voyage to America.—Arrival in New York.—He retires to Morrisania.—Chosen to the Senate of the United States.—Engaged in a cause at the bar with Hamilton.—Presidential election.—Part taken by him as a Senator.—His tour to Canada.—His political opinions.—Orations and political writings.—General Moreau.—Madame de Staël's proposed visit to the United States. - - 475

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr Morris first suggests the idea of the Canal between Lake Erie and the Hudson.—His services in effecting that work.—His death.—Sketch of his character by Madame de Damas.—Concluding remarks. - - - - - - - 495

LIFE

OF

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE MORRIS FAMILY IN AMERICA.—BIRTH AND EDUCATION OF GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.—HIS COLLEGE ORATIONS.—STUDIES LAW WITH WILLIAM SMITH, THE HISTORIAN OF NEW YORK.—WRITES ON THE FINANCE OF THE COLONY.—PRACTISES LAW.—MEDITATES A VISIT TO EUROPE.—FIRST MOVEMENTS IN NEW YORK CONCERNING THE AGGRESSIONS OF ENGLAND.—MR MORRIS'S VIEWS OF THAT SUBJECT.

Richard Morris was the original stock of a family, which, for more than a century, through the popular and commanding talents of some of its members, exercised a controlling influence in the political events of New York and New Jersey. His descendants have now become numerous in both those States, and have spread into other parts of the Union. Wearied with the unsettled condition of affairs in England, brought about by the wars of Cromwell, in whose armies he is said to have been a distinguished leader, he turned his views to America, and came over first to the West Indies, and shortly afterwards to New York. Here he purchased an estate near Haerlem, ten miles from the city, containing more than three thousand acres of land. By the Governor's original grant this domain was invested with manorial privi-

leges, and called Morrisania. The first proprietor of the Manor of Morrisania died in 1673, leaving an only son, named Lewis, an infant and an orphan, his mother having died a few months before.

Being thus left, when he was not yet a year old, without parents or any other natural protectors, the government of the colony appointed guardians to take care of him and the property left by his father. Not long afterwards his uncle came to America and settled at Morrisania.* He took his young nephew under his charge, and finally made him heir to his fortune.

The early years of Lewis Morris, the nephew, were wild and erratic. On one occasion, having committed some offence of youthful extravagance or folly, which he knew would displease his uncle, he strolled away to the southern colonies, and thence to the West Indies, where he supported himself for some time as a scrivener. Soon satisfied with the pleasures of wandering, and tired of a life of dependance and privation, he returned again to his uncle's roof, where he was received with kindness. Endowed with strong natural powers, and fond of distinction, he entered at an early age upon a public career. He was one of the Council of New Jersey, and a judge of the Supreme Court of that colony, and also for several years member of the Assembly, and Chief Justice of New York. In this latter colony he was at one period a popular leader in the party of the Assembly and people, in opposition to the Governors, who, as in most of the other colonies, generally continued to keep up a quarrel with the people, by their arbitrary abuse of power and exactions of

* This uncle's name was Lewis Morris. There is a contract on record dated the tenth of August, 1670, in which Richard Morris is styled a merchant of New York, and his brother Lewis a merchant of Barbadoes. By this contract Lewis Morris agreed to come and settle on his brother's lands at Morrisania, but he seems not to have arrived for that purpose till after the death of the latter.

money. During the last eight years of his life, Mr Morris was Governor of New Jersey.

He had twelve children, four sons and eight daughters. Of these sons the two eldest, Lewis and Robert Hunter, walked in the steps of their father, and became emulous of public service and notoriety. Lewis resided at Morrisania, and at an early age was a member of the New York Legislature, supporting, as his father had done before him, the rights and privileges of that body, and the interests of the people. During the latter years of his life he was Judge of Vice Admiralty for New York, having jurisdiction also by his commission over all maritime affairs in Connecticut and New Jersey. Robert Hunter Morris was for more than twenty years one of the Council, and Chief Justice of New Jersey. He visited England and obtained the appointment of Deputy Governor of Pennsylvania, which post he held about two years in one of the most boisterous and troublesome periods recorded in the history of that province. The inroads of the French and Indians on the frontiers, and the disastrous effects of Braddock's defeat, were among the evils that beset his administration; to which may be added his unceasing and stormy contest with the Assembly, in endeavoring to maintain the proprietary prerogatives against the determined opposition of the legislative body, the general voice of their constituents, and above all the powerful weight of the talents and influence of Franklin.

Lewis Morris last mentioned, son of the Governor of New Jersey, had eight children, of whom four were sons, Lewis, Staats Long, Richard, and *Gouverneur*, and four daughters, Mary, Sarah, Euphemia, and Catherine. The eldest son, Lewis, was a graduate of Yale College. He took an early and decided part with the advocates for freedom at the beginning of the Revolution, was a member of the Old Congress from New York, and a signer of the declaration of independence. Staats Long Morris was an officer in the British army, and married the Dutchess of Gordon. He was at one time a member of Parliament, and lived and died in England. Rich-

ard Morris was Judge of Vice Admiralty, and afterwards Chief Justice of New York.

Gouverneur Morris, the subject of the present memoir, was the youngest son by a second marriage, and born at Morrisania January thirty-first, 1752. Very little is known of his early years, and whether as a boy he was remarkable for precocity, or dulness, or mischief, there is neither record nor tradition to inform us. Rumor speaks of his fondness for rural sports, and the delights he enjoyed in rambling over his paternal domains in that species of exercise and amusement. When quite a child he was put to live in the family of a French teacher, M. Tetar, at New Rochelle, where he acquired the basis of the French language, which in after life he wrote and spoke with nearly as much fluency and correctness as his native tongue. His father died before he was twelve years old, leaving him to the care of his mother.

The second marriage of his father seems not to have been well received by the family, and especially by the elder children. Hence a breach was made in the bonds of family union and sympathy, which was not healed for many years, and which contributed to estrange the second wife and her young charge from the interests of the other branches of the family. But as she was left with ample provisions by her husband, neither she nor her children experienced any other inconvenience from these dissentions, than the privation of those endearments, which are the result of reciprocal good feeling and kindness between those, who are bound together by the ties of consanguinity. She applied herself to the management of her affairs, and the education of her son.*

---

* The following is an extract from his father's will, which is dated November nineteenth, 1760. 'It is my desire that my son Gouverneur Morris may have the best education, that is to be had in England or America.'

There is a whimsical clause in this will, which may perhaps be characteristic of its author.

After the usual preparation at the subordinate schools, he was entered at the college in the city of New York, where he graduated in May, 1768, at the age of sixteen. While at college he was more distinguished for quickness of parts and facility of acquisition, than for industry, a passion for learning, or general scholarship. Latin and the mathematics were his favorite studies, and though he began to read Shakspeare and make rhymes at an early period, and notwithstanding a lively imagination was a predominant quality of his mind, yet it may be doubted whether his taste was ever decidedly bent in the direction of elegant letters, or the flowery regions of ornamental literature. The eminent men of his family had all been remarkable for their acuteness, their skill in discussion,

---

'My actions have been so inconsiderable in the world, that the most durable monument will but perpetuate my folly while it lasts. My desire is, that nothing be mentioned about me, not so much as a line in a newspaper to tell the world I am dead. That I have lived to very little purpose, my children will remember with concern when they see the small pittance I have left them, for children judge of the goodness and affection of their parents by the largeness of the sums coming to them. But what I have left them is honestly acquired, which gives me a satisfaction that ill got thousands cannot bestow.'

Excentricity in the construction and wording of wills would seem to have been a hereditary foible in the family. The following is an extract from the will of Lewis Morris, the Governor of New Jersey.

'I forbid any rings or any scarfs to be given at my funeral, or any man to be paid for preaching a funeral sermon over me. Those who survive me will commend or blame my conduct in life as they think fit, and I am not for paying of any man for doing of either; but if any man, whether churchman or dissenter, in or not in priest's orders, is inclined to say anything on that occasion, he may, if my executors think fit to admit him to it. I would not have any mourning worn for me by any of my decsendants, for I shall die in a good old age; and when the Divine Providence calls me hence, I die when I should die, and no relation of mine ought to mourn because I do so, but may perhaps mourn to pay the shopkeeper for his goods, should they comply with what I think the common folly of such an expense.'—*Smith's History of New Jersey, p.* 434.

and power of argument. In these respects he resembled and equalled them, possessing at the same time more genius, more eloquence, and a greater versatility of character, than any of his predecessors. His mathematical propensity adhered to him through life, and was of much service, particularly in his financial and mercantile operations. He would amuse himself with rapid calculations in his mind, and the solution of arithmetical difficulties, unassisted by figures, and sometimes he found occasion for his higher skill in solving practical problems in physical science, such as relate to the velocity and power of running water, and the motion of machinery.

When he graduated as bachelor of arts, it fell to his lot to pronounce an oration before an audience assembled to witness the ceremonies of the day. The city of New York being at that time the residence of the Governor and other officers of government, as well as of many of the principal families of the colony, a college commencement was likely to draw together as enlightened and polished an assemblage of hearers, as could be collected in any other part of the continent, and especially at a time when public amusements were few, and when the college had grown to be an object of considerable interest, on account of the conflicts of political parties in which the affairs of that institution had been made to mingle.

In selecting for the exercise of his unfledged powers the theme of '*Wit and Beauty*,' our youthful orator was actuated more perhaps by a spirit of adventurous exeriment common at his age, than by the dictates of a mature judgment. Be this as it may, he acquitted himself with credit, and won the applause of his auditory, both grave and gay, who saw, or imagined they saw, the fairest promise of the rich fruits of manhood in these buds and blossoms of young fancy and aspiring genius in a boy of sixteen. A copy of this performance is preserved among his papers. Amidst an exuberance of metaphors and rheto rical flourishes, which usually make so large an ingredient in commencement orations, there are not want-

ing ideas and modes of thought, that would have graced a maturer intellect.

The exordium contains an apology for his subject, and is adroitly constructed. 'Long had I debated with myself,' he begins, 'on what subject to address so learned and polite an audience. Pedantically to discuss some knotty point of the schools would be, if not disagreeable, at least dry, insipid, and uninteresting; it would be the retailing of other men's opinions, and endeavoring to explain what I am little acquainted with to those who are well informed. For certainly at a time where law shines forth in its meridian glory, and divinity sprouts up promiscuously on all sides, no sophisms can darken the light of natural equity, nor will our moral duties be obscured or unpractised. Endeavoring therefore to place them in a fairer light, would be to cast a veil over their perfections. A lighter subject may indeed be acceptable to those, who, like myself, are in the early spring of life, but with those in whom sober autumn has repressed the understanding, blunted the passions, and refined the taste, it may not perhaps be so well received. Yet when I consider that the lenity and candor of those, to whom I have the honor of addressing myself, are equal to their learning and judgment, I am the more easily incited to submit this performance to their mild consideration, and to descant upon wit and beauty.'

Having thus begun, he proceeds to the thread of his discourse, and first of all speaks of the characteristics, power, and advantages of wit. This choice gift, is one of Heaven's best boons to social man; it makes the charm of an agreeable companion, it enlivens conversation, promotes innocent mirth, and banishes that sable fiend, melancholy, the restless haunter of our inmost thoughts. It is the two-edged sword of the poet and moralist. 'It gilds the bitter pill of satire, it entices us to read, and compels us to reform. Faults, which escape the grasp of justice, and hide behind the bulwarks of the law, which, like Proteus, change into a thousand shapes and baffle the researches of wisdom, these it strips of their borrowed

plumes, and shows in their native deformity. Whilst the understanding, in teaching and enforcing the duties of morality, fetters vice in a chain of reason, wit boldly rushes on, plies the lash, and goads the monster from her den.' But wit is said to be capricious, and its darts to be thrown without discrimination or mercy. This is a mistake. The instrument is confounded with the agent. Wit is harmless, but like every other strong weapon, it may be wielded to mischievous ends. Wit is a soothing balm, but a malignant temper may convert it into a deadly poison. Wit is cheerful, sunny, and serene, but a morose spirit may enshroud it in a mantle of darkness, and make it an object of terror, and even a source of suffering. Such are the abuses of wit, but not its aims and character.

In touching upon beauty, the second topic of his discourse, the young orator is more flightly and less pointed. His prevailing idea, however, is a good one, that the forms of beauty, as they exist in the physical and moral world, have been the chief means of civilizing the human race, and bringing man into a state of social order and happiness. He is not satisfied with the notions of certain theorists on this subject. 'Philosophers, who find themselves already living in society, say, that mankind first entered into it from a sense of their mutual wants. But the passions of barbarians must have had too great an influence over their understandings to render this probable. They, who were in the prime of life, would never have been persuaded to labor for such as were passed, or had not arrived at that state; and even if they consented to do it, yet the love of liberty, so natural to all, must have prevented both old and young from giving up the right of acting as they pleased, and from suffering themselves to be controlled by the will of another. Besides, reason, unassisted by beauty, would never have smoothed away that savage ferocity, which must have been an inseparable bar to their union.'

This doctrine of the power of beauty to subdue the savage nature of man admits of wide illustration. In the material world all beautiful forms are suited to move the kinder feel-

ings and softer emotions. The heavens with their splendid garniture of celestial orbs, the earth clad in its robe of verdure ever varied in the colors and shapes it assumes, the wide blue sea reflecting from its tranquil bosom the images of the heavenly hosts, that keep watch over its midnight slumbers, these and the myriads of animated semblances of beauty that people air, earth, and ocean, are so many sources of enjoyment, and so many calls on the gratitude and devotion of man. These are the objects of his contemplative thoughts, the themes of his musing hours, and where contemplation dwells the passions are silent, and the social principle is most easily diffused and cultivated.

As in the theatre of natural existences, so in the world of art, the forms of beauty are at once the indications and the causes of melioration, refinement, and the social progress. What are the fine arts, what are the arts of life, but proofs of this position? What are sculpture, architecture, painting, what the thousand varied combinations of taste and elegance, which serve for the ornaments and convenience of the social state, but so many demonstrations of the same fact? They divest man of his savage attributes, and bring him under the influence of his milder nature. Moral beauty comes to the same result. Virtue is beautiful, vice deformed; the one refines, purifies, expands, elevates; the other debases and degrades; the one promotes good faith, order, and tranquillity in society; the other perfidy, misrule, and confusion; the one is a cheerful attendant on happiness, the other is leagued with misery. Such is the power of beauty in nature, in art, and the soul of man. The speaker does not forget to enlarge on female beauty and its all conquering influence, and here he draws upon his classical erudition, and the records of history, and talks of heroes, and conquerors, and the downfall of empires, the youthful king of Macedon, and of others, who 'laid the spoils of a captive world at beauty's feet.' But enough has been said to give some idea of this first effort in the departments of composition and eloquence, in which he afterwards became so successful and eminent.

When he left college he lost no time in deliberating on the choice of a profession, for he seems to have destined himself for the law from the time of his first reflections on the subject. His ancestors had gained renown in this career, and it was natural, that his inclination should lead him in the same direction. He knew, moreover, that his success in life, his fortune and fame, his future usefulness and consideration, depended on his own efforts. A legacy of two thousand pounds, to be paid after his mother's death, was all he had to expect from his father's estate.

Naturally active, sanguine in his temperament, conscious of his powers, and not wanting in ambition, he had an early and continued confidence in himself, which enabled him to command all the resources of his mind, and to convert them on any given occasion to the best account. In fact, this self confidence was one of the remarkable features of his character through life, and perhaps its tendency was rather to err on the side of boldness and presumption, than on that of timidity and reserve. But there are few more enviable qualities of the understanding, than the power of ascertaining its own bias and strength, and of causing these to unite and co-operate in the attainment of a definite object. No man had this power in a greater degree than Gouverneur Morris, nor exercised it with more skill and effect. He has often been heard to say, that in his intercourse with men he never knew the sensation of fear or inferiority, of embarrassment or awkwardness. Although this almost daring self-possession, which never forsook him, may at times have deprived his manners of the charm, which a becoming diffidence and gentleness of demeanor are apt to infuse, yet as a means of advancement in the world, it must be allowed, when properly regulated, to take precedence of every other quality.

He commenced the study of the law soon after he graduated as bachelor of arts, and applied himself with assiduity, becoming more and more pleased with his new pursuit as he advanced. With a mind naturally given to method, and

patient in research, he was not discouraged by the technicalities, dry details, and multitude of forms, which block up the entrance to the temple of legal fame, and which appear so formidable to the uninitiated; on the contrary, he set himself resolutely at work to make his way through them by dint of perseverance and labor; and if we may put any faith in tradition, and in such evidences as remain on record, as well as the declaration of some of his living associates, his success was adequate to his determination and industry. He prosecuted his studies of the law under the direction of William Smith, the historian of New York, at that time an eminent lawyer, and afterwards Chief Justice of the province. A close intimacy had subsisted for many years between Mr Smith and his family, and the effects of this friendship the young student seems fully to have participated.

While yet a novitiate in the studies of his adopted profession, he took his master's degree in the college, and the task again devolved upon him to make a new exhibition of his talents in another oration. The character of this performance is much like that of the first, tinged with youthful extravagance, dealing in superlatives, breathing soft strains of sentiment, and scattering flowers and fragrance with a prodigal liberality, yet there is at bottom a sound basis of thought, and throughout the piece a texture of just conceptions and good sense, which raises it above the ordinary exercises of a youth not yet twenty. His subject was '*Love*,' a very good theme, one might say, for a sonnet, or a few stanzas from a despairing swain, but an odd one for an oration before a grave and learned audience, assembled to witness a literary exhibition in a university.

Let it not be imagined, however, that he confines himself to any narrow technical sense of that magic word. He speaks of love as a principle, which pervades all things, separating the good from the evil, the bond of social union, the soul of friendship, the magnet of sympathy, and the bright and steady polestar of the moral world. Within this compass there is no

barrenness of topics. The orator treats of the objects and uses of love. He descants on love as a religious feeling, on benevolence and patriotism, on parental, filial, and connubial love, and traces the consequences of this all pervading principle on the order of nature and condition of men.

Let his own words speak for him on one point, the love of country. 'It is not a mere something we are unacquainted with, that renders our natal soil so peculiarly agreeable, it is our friends, our relations, parents, children, laws, religion. Aided by the force of these considerations, reason impresses a love of country upon the heart of every social being. Nay, there is some secret principle within us, some innate tenderness for that spot where we first drew our breath, first saw the light, the scene of our infant joys, some gentle effusion of divinity congenial with the soul, which enforces it far beyond the power of reason. This is a universal principle of patriotism confined by no bounds. It rules in all countries, and in all nations. The sons of tyranny acknowledge it; the meanest slave has through this, an affection for his country. What then must be his love, who has tasted liberty at the fountain, who lives under a Constitution dispensing the joys of freedom wherever it prevails, who possesses the sacred rights of a British subject, rights torn from the heart of tyranny, nourished with the best blood of his ancestors, and transmitted to him on the point of their swords? A Britain's love of country is fixed on the solid basis of freedom. Liberty! Nurse of heroes! Parent of worth! Best blessing of society! Long continue to smile upon this happy soil. Grant that my countrymen may feel the fulness of thy influence, that they may nobly advance under the shadow of thy wings in the pursuit of true glory, rise virtuously superior to the ills of fortune, and attain to that perfection in attempting to acquire which the Romans failed. May they ever be loyal, may they ever be free.'

We here discover the germs, which grew into strength and maturity, as the young orator advanced in years, and particularly when he was called not long afterwards to put in practice

his doctrines at the beginning of the great revolutionary struggle, throughout which it will appear that he acted a bold, consistent, and distinguished part. His love of liberty and of country remained as ardent as ever, and his loyalty as firm, though devoted to a different object.

Towards the close of the year 1769 the Assembly of New York had a project for raising money by issuing bills of credit, to be put out on a loan, with the view of appropriating the interest to the payment of the debts of the colony, and for other public exigences. It was understood, that the government in England would approve such a bill, if it should pass the colonial legislature. It was a measure highly acceptable to the people, because it would make money more plenty, and they looked no farther. Some of the sensible men of the province, however, took up the other side of the question, and were opposed to the issuing of a new paper currency, foreseeing no absolute relief in the scheme, and an increase of embarrassment in the end. It would encourage farmers to borrow beyond their necessities, and merchants to contract new debts on an artificial credit, and the last scene of the drama, whenever it came, must be wound up with renewed instances of bankruptcy and distress.

In the midst of the general excitement produced by these discussions, young Morris found himself drawn into the current, and though at that time but barely eighteen, he resolved to try his hand at the generous task of conveying light to the public mind. He wrote anonymously against the bill, and deprecated the evil of a paper currency, as no other than a mischievous pretence for putting off a day of payment, which must come at some time, and which ought to be met promptly by substantial funds collected from the resources of the province.

He went into an elaborate calculation, founded on the existing debt of the colony, and the annual amount of exports and imports, to show the ill effects such a measure would have on trade,

and the actual loss that must eventually be sustained, by throwing into circulation a paper currency in the manner contemplated by the bill. The first fruits of his financial abilities, afterwards so eminently developed, are clearly seen in these juvenile essays. Among his closing remarks are the following.

'It is said, that the imported foreign manufactures into this colony exceed the exports. If so, what will be our situation twenty years hence, should this paper currency take effect? A question may naturally arise here, why are the inhabitants of the colony so desirous of having it, if it be so pernicious in its consequences? The answer is ready, because they know not those consequences, because they will not know them, because they are in debt, and because, from a selfishness they ought to be ashamed of, they would pay their debts at the expense of the province. The farmer owes money to the merchant, and will be able, if this takes place, to pay it by taking up money at interest two per cent cheaper than he can now. The merchant, if the farmer pays him, can buy bills at an exorbitant price to pay part of his debts in Great Britain, and can gain credit to run himself further in debt. To make up his loss in sterling bills, he will of course raise the price of his sterling manufactures; and thus, that the debtors in this province may clear two per cent on the money they owe, the province is to be ruined; and, that the present generation may live in ease, posterity is to be involved beyond the probability of redemption. Before this happens, may you, my countrymen, be convinced of your own interests and steadily pursue them; may you be induced with patience to bear present small evils in preference to great ones yet to come; and may you have the fortitude to resist the importunities, and arguments to refute the fallacies, of those schemers, who with specious appearances decoy us into ruin; for however they may gild the pill they persuade us to swallow, and whatever show of reason drawn from our necessities they may produce to make us swallow it, still truths stand uncontroverted, that a multiplied paper currency

is a never failing source of national debt, and that there are no bounds to national debt but national ruin.'

In regard to this last remark, it must be remembered, that it does not necessarily apply to all kinds of 'paper currency,' but only to the particular kind which he has been considering, that is, certificates of loans issued by the government on the strength of its own credit, merely for the purpose of obtaining a temporary relief, and on such terms as to afford an undue temptation to adventurous borrowers.

In another paper our young financier takes on himself the part of a legislator, and criticises the forms of the bill, and points out with a good deal of acuteness various defects and unsound principles, which he conceives it to contain. The following extract may serve as a specimen. 'Whether former acts,' says he, 'authorize such a method of proceeding I cannot tell, but by this the jurisdiction of the supreme court, which is according to the rules of the common law, and the dictates of common sense, confined within the bounds of the colony, is nevertheless by a legislature, whose jurisdiction is the same, extended to the trial of felonies therein named, though committed in a different province; which is indeed giving to others what does not belong to themselves; like that little Prince of Italy, who gave away the whole continent of America and the richest provinces of Asia to the Kings of Spain and Portugal.'

In October, 1771, Mr Morris was licensed to practise as an attorney at law, full three months before he was twenty years of age. His financial discussions, and some other proofs of his abilities, had made him known to the principal men of the province; and a volunteer address to a jury about the time of his being licensed, on some occasion in which the community took a deep interest, was represented by the hearers as an extraordinary display of eloquence and skilful reasoning in so young a man. With the advantages of his family name, a fine person, an agreeable elocution, active and industrious habits, talents, and ambition, no young man in the province

was thought to exhibit a fairer promise of rapid advancement, and ultimate eminence in his profession. But Providence had destined him to another and a wider sphere. It was his fortune to come upon the theatre of action at a time, when events of the greatest moment both to his country and to the civilized world at large were ripening into maturity, and it was likewise his fortune to take a conspicuous part in the accomplishment of those events. For the present, however, his views reached no farther than to the limited distinction of a colonial lawyer, and his chief aims were to attain an elevated rank in the profession of his choice. Bent steadily on this purpose, neither his ambition nor his active spirit would allow him to neglect any means of qualifying himself for the fullest expansion and best use of his powers.

Like most young men he indulged early dreams of foreign travel, and scarcely had he completed his professional studies, when he began seriously to think of a voyage across the Atlantic. Curiosity was not his only motive, for his ambition aimed at higher things than mere amusement or pleasure; he hoped to gather such fruits of experience and knowledge, as would be of solid advantage to him in his future career, being satisfied that,

> 'He cannot be a perfect man,
> Not being tried and tutored in the world.'

While deliberating on this subject he wrote the following letter to his friend, Mr William Smith, in whom, by the free and unreserved manner in which he lays open his mind and asks advice, he seems to have had much confidence.

'February 20th, 1772.

'Dear Sir,

'I have thoughts of sailing for London in the Miller, and I beg your sentiments with the same candor, that I deliver my own. I shall pay most regard to your advice, because I believe it will be dictated by friendship, and founded on a more intimate knowledge of me than I possess.

'The advantages I expect from a twelve months' sojourning in England are shortly these. I hope to form some acquaintances, that may hereafter be of service to me. To model myself after some persons who cut a figure in the profession of the law, to form my manners and address by the example of the truly polite, to rub off in the gay circle a few of those many barbarisms, which characterize a provincial education, and to curb that vain self sufficiency, which arises from comparing ourselves with companions who are inferior to us. As this last is the most agreeable, so it is the most dangerous kind of flattery, the surest source of vanity, a disease which can be cured only by conversing with our superiors in understanding.

'There are many dangers, which it is alleged attend a young man thrown from under his parents' wings upon the gay stage of pleasure and dissipation, where a wanton circle of delusive joys courts his acquaintance, and an endless variety of objects prevents satiety and removes disgust; and to all the trite observations that may be made on this subject in the present instance, perhaps it may be added, that I have naturally a taste for pleasure, and, if it be allowed that I have a *taste* for pleasure, it may naturally follow that I shall avoid those low pleasures, which abound in as great an exuberance on this as on the other side of the Atlantic. As for those poignant joys, which are the lot of the affluent, like Tantalus I may grasp at them, but they will certainly be out of my reach. I might go farther and make my observations more particular, but as Lord Bacon told the Commons, with respect to his Majesty's power and prerogative, these things are better to be imagined by you than expressed by me.

'I desire, however, that you will consider how much better my time may now be spared than hereafter. I have somehow or other been so hurried through the different scenes of childhood and youth, that I have still some time left to pause before I tread the great stage of life, and you know how much our conduct there depends upon the mode of our education. After what I have said, it will be needless to add, that my in-

clinations have taken part in this debate. However, believe me, my doubts and hopes have agreed to make you their arbiter, and there is a rule of submission entered in the court of conscience. I am, dear Sir, your friend and servant,

'Gouverneur Morris.'

To this letter his friend replied as follows.

'New York, February 25th, 1772.

'My Dear Gouverneur,

'I take your letter very kindly, and so am bribed on the side of your inclination. I could write a long letter in favor of your voyage. There are volumes upon the benefits of travelling. But all the world cannot have these pleasures. To some it would be useless to visit distant countries, others it would ruin.

'If you mean to adorn your character, I say, go. But considering your time of life, and the country you go to, I tremble at every step you are to take. Much depends upon your fortune. I have at times repented my confinement to these shores. I correct myself again upon reflecting, that if my industry had not been incessant, I might have been a beggar, or compelled to drudge, which is the same thing, in an evening hour, while those I sat out with are singing a requiem to their souls.

'Our end is happiness. Without flattery (for I am serious) you can support a reputation in your own country, sufficient to add to what you have, both by business, marriage, &c. Your travels will affect the funds you possess, and if they increase your knowledge, perhaps they will proportionably abate your industry. I foresee it is *now* or *never*. It often happens that we are driven to the choice of one of two things, when we desire both. I dare say you want both a wife and an estate. You have at least had desires for both. Some take a wife and trust to fortune for future prosperity, and they have not been disappointed. But how many others are in misery, by venturing upon this leap?

'Your reason for travelling to *make friends* puts me in mind of what I have said. I suppose you are to return, for what American stands a chance on the other side of the water? And what is there on this side worth your acceptance, until age has made you indolent, and ostentatious pride gets the better of active, and generous, and noble ambition?

'I wish you had already shot the Gulph. I fear to persuade you to the attempt. Remember your uncle Robin.* He saw England thrice. No man had better advantages, either from nature or education. He began to figure with £30,000. He did not leave £5000. I know others that never saw the east side of the great lake, who had no other friends than their own heads and their hands, to whom your uncle was in bonds. What! *Virtus post nummos?* Curse on inglorious wealth. Spare your indignation. I too detest the ignorant miser. But both virtue and ambition abhor poverty, or they are mad. Rather imitate your grandfather,† than your uncle. The first sought preferment *here*, and built upon his American stock. The other *there*, and died the moment before the shipwreck. Is it not an Apostle, who warns us against the sin that easily besets us? If this is not inspiration, it is good sense. Find out yours.

'Upon the whole, I must refer you to your mother. She must spare a great deal before you can resolve with prudence. And when the guineas lay at your feet, think! think! think! I love you with great sincerity, or I should not be so much puzzled.

'WILLIAM SMITH.'

From the tenor of his friend's hints in this letter, (for advice it can hardly be called) it is evident that serious obstacles stood in the way of his contemplated voyage. Further reflection doubtless brought them in a stronger light to his own mind,

---

* Robert Hunter Morris.

† Lewis Morris, Governor of New Jersey.

and made him contented to abandon his plans, or at least to defer the execution of them to a better opportunity. We hear no more about them, but find him for the three next years closely devoted to his profession, not sitting idly in his office waiting for the tide of accident or the special favor of friends to bring employment within his doors, but in the steady labor of an active and respectable practice.

One of the important causes in which he was engaged was that of a contested election, in Westchester county, where he had Mr Jay for an opponent. It involved principles of evidence, questions about the right of suffrage as then exercised, and a complication of facts, local and general, which gave full scope for the display of legal knowledge and forensic skill. He was also licensed as an attorney in New Jersey. But the records of a young lawyer's practice afford slender materials for biography. I shall forbear to analyze, as I have forborne to peruse, the bundles of briefs, notes, references, forms, skeletons of arguments, and fragments of opinions, which afford a monument of his industry and toil, during this period, as no doubt they do of his learning and talents. The following letter to Mr Penn, of Philadelphia, and his lady, contains matter of a different cast, and shows that his mind occasionally made excursions beyond the rigid purlieus of the law.

'New York, January 7th, 1774.

'Dear Sir,

'I am confident you will not attribute my silence to a want of respect or regard, for I am sure you have a better opinion of me than to imagine I should fail in either towards you. In good truth, I know of nothing worth your attention. News we have not any, at least not more than the gazettes will promulgate to the listening ear of attentive inquiry. I beg Mr Rivingston's* pardon for encroaching on his style. Politics I dislike, and only look on with pity, while the madness of so

* Publisher of a Newspaper in New York.

many is made the gain of so few, exclaiming with poor Hamlet, "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?" Religion—the very word demands respect, and, as B—— says of his wife, "I speak of her with reverence." Love—as dull as a tale twice told. Friendship—gone to pay Astræa a visit: her votaries so few that the world knows them not. Business—it has so transformed, and transmigrated, and almost transubstantiated me, as hardly to leave the memory of what I was. But you are not a son of care; smoothly then may your minutes flow. May the table of life be spread before you with uncloying variety; and chiefly may you be free from that listless vacuity of mind, which admonishes us that man was intended for an active being. Pray how does that honest man of the heroic age, General Lee? I suppose he gave a loud plaudit to the Boston wights. Here follows a word to Mrs Penn.

'Dear Madam,

'What a terrible life do I lead. Worse than at Philadelphia. There I was all night up it is true, but it was in company, making merry. Here up all night writing, and like his grace the Duke of C. "nobody with me but myself." Pity it is you are not here—balls, concerts, assemblies—all of us mad in the pursuit of pleasure. Not a pause. Grave phizes are grinned out of countenance, prudence kicked out of doors, and your sober, solid, sedate friend, (myself meaning) is become the butt of unfledged witlings. Mr Griffin is here. How does your neighbor's family? Bless us, what a foolish question. You live at too great a distance to know. Lady Dunmore is here—a very elegant woman. She looks, and speaks, and moves, and is, a lady. Her daughters are fine, sprightly, sweet girls. Goodness of heart flushes from them in every look. How is it possible, said that honest soul our Governor to me, how is it possible my Lord Dunmore could so long deprive himself of those pleasures he must enjoy in such a family? When you see them you will feel the full force of this observation.

'Let me beg you to make my respects acceptable to your family, and to believe that I am really your friend,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

When the news of the act of Parliament for shutting up the port of Boston reached New York from England, it created a strong sensation there, as it did throughout America, for although the bill was intended only to operate against the town of Boston, yet it was designed as a punishment to the inhabitants of that place, on account of the spirited resistance they had made to the oppressive acts of the British government, the principles of which were equally dangerous to the liberties of all the colonies. A letter was forthwith despatched by express to the Committee of Correspondence in Boston, assuring them of the general indignation against this measure, and that a meeting of the citizens would be immediately called to give a public testimony of their sentiments, and of their determination to make common cause with the people of Boston.* The meeting was summoned by a public notice, and a large concourse assembled. The tories, as the adherents of the Ministry were called, and the moderate men of wealth and character, came to the meeting with the view of counteracting the efforts of the warm partizans of opposition, and having previously concerted matters together, they expected to give a turn to the proceedings suited to their purpose. They had even gone so far as to make out the list of a committee, who should be appointed to consider the affair of the Boston Port Bill, the immediate cause of this commotion. But this was discovered by Sears in time to thwart their plans. He proposed that no lists should be presented, but that the committee should be appointed by nominations on the spot. This was carried, and the committee consisted of a nearly

*This letter was signed by Captain Sears and Alexander McDougall, (afterwards general Mc Dougall,) who were the earliest and most zealous leaders in the ranks of the *Sons of Liberty* in New York.

equal number of both parties, but with a preponderance on the liberal side.*

Mr Morris was present at this meeting, and on the next day he wrote an account of it to his friend Mr Penn, together with some of his own opinions on the political aspect of the times.

'New York, May 20th, 1774.

'Dear Sir,

'You have heard, and you will hear, a great deal about politics, and in the heap of chaff *you* may find some grains of good sense. Believe me, Sir, freedom and religion are only watch words. We have appointed a Committee, or rather we have nominated one. Let me give you the history of it. It is needless to premise, that the lower orders of mankind are more easily led by specious appearances, than those of a more exalted station. This and many similar propositions you know better than your humble servant.

'The troubles in America during Grenville's administration put our gentry upon this finesse. They stimulated some daring coxcombs to rouse the mob into an attack upon the bounds of order and decency. These fellows became the Jack Cades of the day, the leaders in all riots, the belwethers of the flock. The reason of the manœuvre in those, who wished to keep fair with government, and at the same time to receive the incense of popular applause, you will readily perceive. On the whole, the shepherds were not much to blame in a politic point of view. The belwethers jingled merrily, and roared out liberty, and property, and religion, and a multitude of cant terms,

* The idea of a general Congress of delegates from all the colonies was also brought forward and insisted on. The multitude fell in with it, and the ministerialists, finding it in vain to resist the torrent, signified their acquiescence. A letter was accordingly written to the Committee of Boston on the subject. Although the proposal for a general Congress had begun to be talked of by individuals, it is believed that this was the first occasion on which it was promulgated by any public assemblage.

which every one thought he understood, and was egregiously mistaken. For you must know the shepherds kept the dictionary of the day, and like the mysteries of the ancient mythology, it was not for profane eyes or ears. This answered many purposes; the simple flock put themselves entirely under the protection of these most excellent shepherds. By and bye behold a great metamorphosis, without the help of Ovid or his divinities, but entirely effectuated by two modern genii, the god of ambition and the goddess of faction. The first of these prompted the shepherds to shear some of their flock, and then, in conjunction with the other, converted the bel-wethers into shepherds. That we have been in hot water with the British Parliament ever since, every body knows. Consequently these new shepherds had their hands full of employment. The old ones kept themselves least in sight, and a want of confidence in each other was not the least evil which followed. The port of Boston has been shut up. These sheep, simple as they are, cannot be gulled as heretofore. In short, there is no ruling them; and now, to leave the metaphor, the heads of the mobility grow dangerous to the gentry, and how to keep them down is the question. While they correspond with the other colonies, call and dismiss popular assemblies, make resolves to bind the consciences of the rest of mankind, bully poor printers, and exert with full force all their other tribunitial powers, it is impossible to curb them.

'But art sometimes goes farther than force, and therefore to trick them handsomely a committee of patricians was to be nominated, and into their hands was to be committed the majesty of the people, and the highest trust was to be reposed in them by a mandate, that they should take care, *quod respublica non capiat injuriam.* The tribunes, through want of a good legerdemain in the senatorial order, perceived the finesse, and yesterday I was present at a grand division of the city, and there I beheld my fellow citizens very accurately counting all their chickens, not only before any of them were hatched, but before above one half of the eggs were laid. In

short, they fairly contended about the future forms of our government, whether it should be founded upon Aristocratic or Democratic principles.

'I stood in the balcony, and on my right hand were ranged all the people of property, with some few poor dependants, and on the other all the tradesmen, &c. who thought it worth their while to leave daily labor for the good of the country. The spirit of the English Constitution has yet a little influence left, and but a little. The remains of it, however, will give the wealthy people a superiority this time, but would they secure it, they must banish all schoolmasters, and confine all knowledge to themselves. This cannot be. The mob begin to think and to reason. Poor reptiles! it is with them a vernal morning, they are struggling to cast off their winter's slough, they bask in the sunshine, and ere noon they will bite, depend upon it. The gentry begin to fear this. Their committee will be appointed, they will deceive the people, and again forfeit a share of their confidence. And if these instances of what with one side is policy, with the other perfidy, shall continue to increase, and become more frequent, farewell aristocracy. I see, and I see it with fear and trembling, that if the disputes with Britain continue, we shall be under the worst of all possible dominions. We shall be under the domination of a riotous mob.

'It is the interest of all men, therefore, to seek for reunion with the parent state. A safe compact seems in my poor opinion to be now tendered. Internal taxation to be left with ourselves. The right of regulating trade to be vested in Britain, where alone is found the power of protecting it. I trust you will agree with me, that this is the only possible mode of union. Men by nature are free as the air. When they enter into society, there is, there must be, an implied compact, for there never yet was an express one, that a part of this freedom shall be given up for the security of the remainder. But what part? The answer is plain. The least possible, considering the circumstances of the society, which constitute what may

be called its political necessity. And what does this political necessity require in the present instance? Not that Britain should lay imposts upon us for the support of government, nor for its defence. Not that she should regulate our internal police. These things affect us only. She can have no right to interfere. To these things we ourselves are competent. But can it be said, that we are competent to the regulating of trade? The position is absurd, for this affects every part of the British Empire, every part of the habitable earth. If Great Britain, if Ireland, if America, if all of them, are to make laws of trade, there must be a collision of these different authorities, and then who is to decide the *vis major?* To recur to this, if possible to be avoided, is the greatest of all great absurdities.

'Political necessity therefore requires, that this power should be placed in the hands of one part of the empire. Is it a question which part? Let me answer by asking another. Pray which part of the empire protects trade? Which part of the empire receives almost immense sums to guard the rest? And what danger is in the trust? Some men object, that England will draw all the profits of our trade into her coffers. All that she can, undoubtedly. But unless a reasonable compensation for his trouble be left to the merchant here, she destroys the trade, and then she will receive no profit from it.

'If I remember, in one of those kind letters with which you have honored me, you desire my thoughts on matters as they rise. How much pleasure I take in complying with your requests let my present letter convince you. If I am faulty in telling things, which you know better than I do, you must excuse this fault, and a thousand others for which I can make no apology. I am, Sir, &c.

'Gouverneur Morris.'

In another paper written about the same time, he undertakes to state on what terms he supposes a reconciliation be-

tween the mother country and the colonies might be effected. He thinks '*taxation*' the chief bar, and that in everything else the colonies would be willing to yield a supremacy, reserving at the same time to their own legislatures the disposal of the sums levied within them respectively for the regulation of trade, duties, and customs. 'What will the Americans accept? To answer this question, let the state of the two countries be considered. I build on three facts; first, that reunion between the two is essential to both, I say *essential*; secondly, that in every state there must be of *necessity* one legislature, which is supreme; thirdly, that in every society the members have an antecedent right to the utmost liberty, which can be enjoyed consistent with the general safety. Is taxation an unalienable branch of the supreme legislature? Reason and experience both tell us that it is not. The King of France might invest his parliaments with this right, and yet be supreme in every other instance. In all governments there must be trust somewhere, and there would be no temptation to tyrannize, I believe, when the right of taxation is ceded. Nor will I mention the dernier resort, because I think government should be founded on stationary and not revolutionary principles.'

He mentions also a plan of 'uniting the whole continent in one grand legislature,' and thinks such a scheme would be fortunate, if practicable, but he looks upon it as hopeless, both from the opposition which would be made to it by persons already in power on the one hand, and by the Americans on the other, since its tendency would be to give greater influence to the crown, diminish the importance of each colony, and restrain the democratic spirit, which the constitutions and local circumstances of the country had so long fostered in the minds of the people.

CHAPTER II.

POLITICAL STATE OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES AT THE OPENING OF THE REVOLUTION.—ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST FORMS OF GOVERNMENT.—COMMITTEES OF THE PEOPLE.—FIRST PROVINCIAL CONVENTION AND CONGRESS OF NEW YORK.—MODES OF ELECTION.—PART TAKEN BY MR MORRIS IN THE FIRST CONGRESS.—ASPECT OF POLITICAL OPINIONS IN THE CONGRESS AND IN THE COLONY.—MEANS OF RAISING MONEY.—MR MORRIS'S PLAN.

We are now coming to a period in Mr Morris's life, when we can begin to trace his progress with more distinctness and precision. The great event of a final separation between the British government and the colonies was now approaching, and he was destined to act a commanding part in the drama that followed. We have found him writing to his friend, that he 'disliked politics,' little anticipating probably that this dislike would be so soon conquered, and that a large portion of his future life would be passed amidst the most stirring scenes of political change and excitement. Whatever may have been the impressions of his youth, or the bias of his opinions in the incipient stages of the threatening storm, he betrayed no hesitancy when the crisis came, but united promptly and cordially with the supporters of his country's claims, and from that moment to the end of the contest he stood in the front ranks of those most distinguished for their patriotism, fortitude, and constancy.

The American colonies, during the three first years of the revolution, presented a phenomenon in the political world, of which there is no example in the history of nations. Twelve governments, which had hitherto existed independent of each other, and alike subordinate to a superior power, all at once and as if by common consent, threw off their alle giance to tha

power, and assumed to themselves the perilous task of self government, at the fearful hazard of distraction and anarchy among themselves, and of receiving on their heads the weight of vengeance prepared by their former masters, as a punishment of their disobedience and revolt. No condition of human affairs could be more critical or alarming. The social and political compact was absolutely resolved into its first elements, and it remained with each individual in these wide spread communities to determine in what manner, and on what terms, he would consent to renew this compact, and what sacrifices he would make of his private interests and personal independence for the general good.

The marvellous success, which attended the experiment of erecting a new fabric, and the union of feeling and effort, which contributed to its strength and durability, can only be accounted for by the fact, that the sense of wrong was universally felt, that the burden of oppression rested heavily upon all, and that common suffering and danger kindled a spirit of united resolution, which, from whatever motive it might first originate, rose speedily to the lofty tone of self denial and patriotism. But however we may explain causes, the results will not be the less extraordinary, and the formation of the American Republics must ever be a theme of wonder to those, who judge of social organizations by the annals of past experience, and in all future time it must constitute a novel chapter in the history of mankind.

This is not the place to unfold the principles, or state the facts, by which events so remarkable were brought to pass. As the subject of this memoir, however, was a prominent actor in the revolutionary movements, which gave rise to these events, I shall not be thought to wander from the province of biography, if I introduce such a view of particulars, and such a train of observations, as will conduct the reader to a just estimate of the part he sustained. Mr Morris was a member of the first Provincial Congress of New York, which was convened in the spring of 1775, and he continued a member of

that body under its various names, of Congress, Convention, and Committee of Safety, with the exception of a short period, for nearly three years, till he went to the Continental Congress. Some preliminary remarks are requisite to explain the basis, on which this new representative government of New York was founded.

And here it must be kept in mind, that wherever the power of Great Britain was thrown off or disavowed, all political control passed by its natural course into the hands of the people. No man, or body of men, had authority to command any other body of men or individual; equality of rights produced an equality of condition; and the structure of government could only be raised on the strength of powers delegated anew to certain persons, for this special purpose, by the willing voice of the people, whom circumstances had made the sole arbiters of their own political destiny. Hence the primary movement was to bring the people to understand their interests and act in concert, and the first means used to attain this end was the establishment of Committees of Correspondence in different parts of the country. These committees were chosen by the people in towns, counties, parishes, districts, or smaller neighborhoods. They were entrusted with certain powers, which enabled them to correspond with each other, and to represent in some sort the political views and objects of their constituents. So necessary was this system in itself, and so well adapted to promote the general welfare, that it was acceded to everywhere, and in a short time committees were so universally appointed throughout the colonies, that the friends of liberty had speedy and direct channels open with each other in every part of the continent. This increased their mutual intelligence, gave them confidence and encouragement, harmonized their sentiments, and sowed the seeds of union.

But these committees in many instances had a more important, trust and that was the power of electing deputies to meet the deputies of other committees for the purpose of

consulting on matters, which concerned them in common. This power was delegated to them by the people when they were chosen, and in the Middle and Southern colonies it was exercised on numerous occasions. In the New England colonies the committees possessed extensive powers, but these did not extend to elections, which were held by the people at large in towns, according to the old method.*

The delegates to the first Continental Congress were chosen in different ways. In Massachusetts and some other colonies they were appointed by the regular Assemblies, apparently without any specific powers for this object from the people,

---

* In Massachusetts at first there were commonly three committees chosen in each town;—1. A Committee of Correspondence;—2. A Committee of Inspection;—3. A Committee of Safety.

It was the business of the *first* committee to to forward intelligence, apprize the community of danger, and concert measures of public good. The *second* was employed to take cognizance of the imports of goods into town and country, to prevent the sale of tea, to detect and expose the violation of the non-importation agreement, and the association. The *third* was a kind of executive body, whose duty it was to watch over the safety of the community, the internal police, and the welfare of society, at a time when law was prostrate, and there was no remedy against disorder and confusion. All these committees were empowered to take up persons suspected of hostile sentiments to the liberties of the country.

In February, 1776, the General Court of Massachusetts resolved, that these committees should be united into one, called the *Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety*, and chosen annually by the towns. This committee possessed all the powers of the other three, and was authorized in addition to execute the resolves, directions, and recommendations of the legislature, or rather to see that no one violated them, giving notice to higher powers when such violation in any extraordinary case occurred. The charge of confiscated property was also entrusted to this committee. They had power to send for persons and papers, to call together the military force of the town, to take charge of prisoners of war, and carry laws against tories into effect.

These committees were generally obeyed, but sometimes there was an appeal from their decision to the legislature.

although it was well known that they acted in accordance with the popular voice. In other colonies the delegates were chosen by a convention of committees, elected by the people for this specified purpose. And again they were chosen by committees in their individual capacities, as in New York, where the committee of the city and county of New York first chose a certain number of deputies, and the same appointments were afterwards approved by the other committees in the colony.

But in every method of election, whether to offices of a higher or lower rank, the principle was the same. The leaders were cautious, that the power should actually and visibly come from the people, and it is not likely, that in a single elective body on the continent there was an instance of a member's taking his seat, without exhibiting a well authenticated certificate that he was duly chosen. To this careful attention to the rights of the people, this seeming endeavor to cause all the first springs of government to proceed from them, may be ascribed, more than to any other reason, their confidence in the rulers of their choice, and their invariable submission to their decrees. In this respect the wisdom of the governors and the moderation of the governed are equally worthy of admiration, and whoever would search for the cause of the singular unanimity, which prevailed in the sentiments and acts of the nation, when all the world, influenced by the example of history, was looking for discord and dissolution, will find it in this judicious, uniform, and systematic management of the elections, from the first moment that all power was acknowledged to have reverted to its original possessors the people, till a solid form of government was established. And we may probably go further and say, that it is to the security given by this form to the elective franchise, and the well ballanced principles by which it is regulated, that we owe its present stability and successful operation. Put this in danger, or derange, or curtail it, and we should soon experience the fate of other republics, whether ancient or modern, and sink

either under the corruption of the few, or the licentiousness of the many, or both combined.

The first Provincial Convention of New York assembled in the city of New York on the twentieth of April, 1775, and continued its sittings three days. It consisted of forty-three members, elected from the different counties, and empowered only to choose delegates to the second continental Congress, which was to convene in May. Having executed this trust the Convention was dissolved. The old colonial Assembly had been in session during the winter, and adjourned on the third of April, never to meet again. Several attempts were made in it to bring up the subject of the Continental Congress, to approve their proceedings, and appoint new deputies. All these attempts failed, for though there were several friends of the new order of things in the Assembly, yet the majority were royalists, and refused to sanction in any manner whatever the movements of the people. When this experiment had been fairly tried in the Assembly without success, the committee of the city of New York sent circulars to the other committees, advising a deputation of delegates in Convention, who met as above stated.

These delegates, or deputies, were chosen in the city of New York by ward meetings; in some of the other counties by the committees of correspondence; in others, by a convention of committees chosen in different parts of the county; in others again the several towns chose each a delegate; in Orange county they were chosen by the freeholders after the manner of the old elections.* Each member produced in

* In Westchester county several gentlemen, to whom circulars had been sent, met at the White Plains. They there agreed to send letters to the principal freeholders in the county, recommending a general meeting of the freeholders to take the sense of the people on the expediency of sending deputies to a Convention for choosing delegates to the Continental Congress, requesting each person to whom a circular was written to notify all the freeholders in his district to meet at the

the Convention a certificate of his election. In New York the certificate was signed by the vestrymen of the wards; in other cases by the chairmen of committees, moderators and clerks of town meetings, or by judges and justices.

The day after this Convention separated, that is, on the twenty-third of April, the news of the battle at Lexington reached New York, and created there, as in every other part of the country, the strongest agitation in the minds of the people. The ensigns of war had been unfurled, the blood of innocent citizens shed, and indignation for so wanton an outrage, mingled with alarming apprehensions for the future, roused the public feeling to the highest pitch of excitement. The committee of New York city convened, and resolved that a Provincial Congress ought speedily to be assembled, who should take into their hands the government of the colony, prepare for defence against hostile invasion, and provide for the exigencies of the time. A circular letter was despatched to the several committees in the colony, recommending an election of delegates to meet in a *Provincial Congress*, to consider and execute such measures, as might be essential to the common safety. 'The distressed and alarming situation of our country,' say the committee, 'occasioned by sanguinary measures adopted by the British Ministry, to enforce which, the sword has been actually drawn against our breth-

---

White Plains on a specified day. They met accordingly, and chose their deputies. But there were present at the meeting, as the records affirm, 'an inconsiderable number of persons, who declared that they would not join in the business of the day, nor have anything to do with deputies and congresses, but that they came there for the sole purpose of protesting against such illegal and unconstitutional proceedings.'

There were many loyalists in Westchester county, and those who took this mode of protesting were perhaps prompted to it, by the manner in which the circular to the freeholders was worded, in which it was declared, 'that they who did not appear and vote on that day would be presumed to acquiesce in the sentiments of the majority of those who should vote.'

ren in Massachusetts, threatening to involve this continent in all the horrors of a civil war, obliges us to call for the united aid and counsel of the colony at this dangerous crisis.'

The committee at the same time drew up a paper in the form of an association, to be signed by the inhabitants at large, in which, after declaring themselves 'persuaded, that the salvation of the rights and liberties of America depend, under God, on the firm union of its inhabitants in a vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for its safety, and convinced of the necessity of preventing the anarchy and confusion, which attend a dissolution of the powers of government,' they resolve 'in the most solemn manner never to become slaves, and to associate, under all the ties of religion, honor, and love to their country, to adopt and endeavor to carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or resolved upon by the Provincial Convention, for the purpose of preserving their constitution, and opposing the execution of the several arbitrary and oppressive acts of the British Parliament, until a reconciliation between Great Britain and America, on constitutional principles, which is most ardently desired, can be obtained.' Thus stimulated there was no delay with the committees in appointing delegates to the proposed Congress, and they met in New York on the 22d of May. The mode of election was nearly the same as in the preceding Convention. Eighty-one members were returned, of whom about seventy attended. Among this number were Richard Montgomery of Dutchess country, afterwards the immortal hero of Quebec, and Gouverneur Morris, elected from the county of Westchester. Thus in three weeks from the time when the circular letters were written from New York, the elections had been completed, and the members were all at their post.

The first act of the Congress, after organizing themselves, was to decide on their rules of proceeding. The most important of these was the plan of voting, which they adopted. It was agreed that all questions should be determined by a ma-

jority of the votes of the counties represented, and that the votes of the city and county of New York should be considered as four, the city and county of Albany three, and each of the other counties two. This scheme was adopted on the principle, that each county should vote nearly in the ratio of its comparative importance, in regard to its population and wealth. Had the representation been perfect, then a vote from each member would have produced the same result, but since there was no limit to the number of members from each county, this mode of voting was the only one, which could approach to an equitable standard.

A similar method, and for similar reasons, was pursued in the Continental Congress, even till the new Constitution was adopted. The ratio there, however, was less equitable than in the case of New York, because each State, whether large or small, had but a single vote, without any reference to its consequence in the scale of the Union as estimated by extent, population, and property. Much was said in those days, as in times more recent, about state rights and state sovereignty, and this indulgence to the small States, of being on a par in the national councils with the large ones, was considered by them as a recognition of their sovereignty, and hard was their struggle in parting with this token of supremacy by the organization of the House of Representatives on its present footing. The happy device of preserving a similitude of the same feature in the Senate procured a tardy acquiescence, but time only has completed the work of reconciliation.

When the Provincial Congress was organized, a motion was made, seconded by Gouverneur Morris, leading to a resolution that implicit obedience ought to be rendered to the Continental Congress, in all matters pertaining to the general regulation of the associated colonies. But the tone of the new assembly was more fully discovered, when it was moved to pass a vote approving the proceedings of the late Continental Congress. The motion was debated, and at length deferred for future consideration. From this result it was evident, that

there was a wavering spirit if not a decided tory interest in the Assembly.

At this stage of affairs very few persons anywhere, and perhaps none in New York, contemplated a separation from the mother country. A redress of grievances, on such terms as should restore and secure the rights and liberties of America, was all that was looked for, even by the most zealous of those engaged in concerting measures of resistance against the oppressive acts of the British Parliament. A few keen sighted men, who had watched the course of events more critically, it may be, had other views, and were prepared from the beginning to go all lengths, believing the hazard to be warranted by the chance of success. If there were any such, their number was small, and they deemed it prudent not to make a public display of the tokens of their presentiments and hopes.

At the beginning of the revolution, and perhaps throughout the contest, the British had more friends in the colony of New York, than in any other part of the continent. This may be ascribed to several causes. In the first place, there was a large number of landed proprietors and wealthy families, who naturally felt a greater security for their property under an established order of things, than could be expected in the commotions and risks of a change. Again, the Johnsons, father and sons, who had dwelt for many years as Indian agents on the fontiers, and were noted for their loyalty, possessed a strong influence over the inhabitants of those regions, and for some time after the troubles commenced, the people west of Albany were much infected with tory principles and tendencies. Long Island, Staten Island, and even the city of New York and the banks of the Hudson below the Highlands, were so much exposed to hostile attacks in case of war, and so little capable of defence, that the common dictates of nature would incline the people to the safer side, and make them tardy in throwing off allegiance to a power, whose effects they could neither resist nor escape.

But notwithstanding the tone of sentiment, which we have seen to prevail in this first Provincial Congress, the members agreed, as it would seem by a unanimous vote, to subscribe the Association, and they recommended the same to all the county committees and their constituents. They likewise instructed the committees to return to the Congress the names of all persons, who should neglect or refuse to sign the Association; but at the same time they added, that no coercive steps ought to be used, as the propriety of the measure, the example of the other colonies, and the necessity of union, were presumed to be sufficient arguments.

Among the first subjects of deliberation in the Congress was the means of raising money to defray the expense of military preparations, and other arrangements, for separate government and defence. Mr Morris was one of the committee for devising a plan, and it is understood that an able and elaborate report presented by them to the Congress was from his pen. The report sets out with the position, that the crisis of affairs demanded an extraordinary supply of money from some quarter, and that this supply could not be raised by taxation. An emission of a paper currency, therefore, opened the only way of meeting the difficulty, and the question to be settled was, in what manner this could most easily be effected. After a series of remarks on the pecuniary condition and resources of the colony, and the general operations of a paper medium, three methods are suggested in the report, by which such a currency might be put in circulation.

'First, that every colony should strike for itself the sum apportioned by the Continental Congress.

'Secondly, that the Continental Congress should strike the whole sum necessary, and each colony become bound to sink its proportionable part; or,

'Thirdly, that the Continental Congress should strike the whole sum, and apportion the several shares to the different colonies, each colony becoming bound to discharge its own particular part, and all the colonies to discharge the part, which any particular colony shall be unable to pay.'

These several methods were examined, their respective advantages compared, and the committee decided in favor of the last, as giving a more certain credit to the currency, securing a wider circulation, and presenting a new bond of union to the associated colonies, by creating a common interest in the property of the circulating medium, and a common responsibility for its final redemption. The report was throughout patriotic, founded on liberal views of the great cause in which the friends of liberty in every part of America were engaged, and tinged with no local partialities inconsistent with the good of the whole.

When it was read and received, a day was fixed for its being resumed, and on motion of Mr Morris it was agreed, that the doors should be open on that day, and the merchants and others of the city and colony invited to attend and hear the debates. It was discussed accordingly in presence of a thronged audience, and Mr Morris's speech on that occasion was listened to with admiration, and looked upon as an extraordinary display of argument and eloquence in a young man of twenty-three. The knowledge he manifested of a most intricate subject, which is seldom mastered by years of experience, the force of his reasoning, the ingenuity of his illustrations, a manner at once dignified and persuasive, an elocution smooth and unembarrassed, confidence in his own powers, and a deep sense of the importance of his subject, all these conspired to quicken his energies and strengthen his efforts, till he found his way to the hearts of his hearers, and carried captive their understandings. It was a day of glory and auspicious moment to the young orator, long remembered and treasured up in the minds of the people, as a precursor of future success and eminence.*

---

* Judge Benson has written a short sketch of the character of Gouverneur Morris, from which the following passage is taken. 'The subject, which more than any other occupied the Provincial Congress in 1775, was a *paper currency*, our only *money sinew* of war. Mr Mor-

The report was adopted without amendment or change, and ordered to be forwarded to the delegates of the colony in the Continental Congress, with a letter drafted by the committee of correspondence.* It was left to the discretion of the delegates, who were desired to introduce such parts of it to the notice of Congress, as they should think advisable. It should moreover be kept in mind, that this discussion occurred some weeks before the subject was taken up by the Continental Congress, and it is but fair to presume, that the hints contained in the New York report, and communicated through the delegates of that colony, operated as important aids in arranging the plan, which was afterwards adopted by the representatives of the nation, and which agreed in its main features with the suggestions of the report.

---

ris appeared to have comprehended it throughout, and as it were by intuition. He advanced and maintained opinions new to all. There was none who did not ultimately perceive and acknowledge them to be just. They have since become familiar.' Judge Benson was at that day a contemporary with Mr Morris, and an ardent associate in the same general cause. He had been a member of the Convention then lately held for selecting delegates to the Continental Congress.

*Soon after the meeting of the Provincial Congress, a *Committee of Correspondence* was appointed, of whom Mr Morris was chairman. It was their duty to take charge of letters received from other public bodies and individuals, and draft replies, as well as to write letters originating in the Congress.

CHAPTER III.

INDIAN DISTURBANCES ON THE FRONTIERS.—GUY JOHNSON'S LETTER AND THE REPLY OF THE CONGRESS.—INTERCEPTED CORRESPONDENCE OF GENERAL GAGE.—PREPARATIONS FOR MILITARY DEFENCE.—PROJECT OF THE CONGRESS FOR A CONCILIATION WITH ENGLAND.—MR MORRIS'S MODIFICATION.—BURKE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE ASSEMBLY OF NEW YORK.—CEREMONY ON THE OCCASION OF GENERAL WASHINGTON'S PASSING THROUGH NEW YORK TO TAKE COMMAND OF THE ARMY.

Hardly had the Provincial Congress convened, when intelligence was received of threatened troubles with the Indians on the frontiers, through the influence of Colonel Guy Johnson, superintendent of Indian Affairs, who resided in Tryon county. He wrote a letter to the mayor and corporation of Albany, which was forwarded to the Congress in New York, and in which he utters both complaints and threatenings. 'As the peace and happiness of the country,' he observes, 'are objects that every good man should have at heart, I think it highly necessary to acquaint you, that for a few days I have been put to the great trouble and expense of fortifying my house, and keeping a large body of men for the defence of my person, having received repeated accounts that either the New Englanders, or some persons in or about the city of Albany, or town of Schenectady, are coming up to seize and imprison me, on a ridiculous and malicious report, that I intend to make the Indians destroy the inhabitants, or to that effect.' And then, after mentioning the absurdity of this report, and the pains he had taken to quiet the Indians, and preserve tranquillity on certain occasions, he adds; 'In discharging this duty I likewise essentially served the public, but should I neglect myself, and be tamely made prisoner, it is

clear to all who know anything of the Indians, that they will not sit still and see their council fire extinguished, and their superintendent driven from his duty, but will come upon the frontiers in revenge with a power sufficient to commit horrid devastations.' He closes his letter by requesting, that such measures may be taken by the proper authorities as will remove suspicions, and leave him to the honest exercise of his office, without the necessity of keeping armed men around him for his protection.

To this letter the Congress replied as follows, on the third of June.

'At a time when the American subjects on this extensive continent are almost with one voice and united effort nobly exerting themselves in the glorious cause of liberty, and endeavoring to reconcile the unnatural and unhappy differences between the parent state and these colonies, upon permanent and constitutional principles, we cannot help lamenting that we have received disagreeable accounts from your quarter, that there are individuals officiously interrupting the mode and measures conceived necessary to bring about these salutary purposes.

'On the one hand, you may depend upon it, that we shall discourage and discountenance every attempt against your person and property, and shall use our utmost endeavors to render them safe and secure; but on the other hand, we expect you will not counteract any of the measures expedient for the common weal recommended by the Continental or Provincial Congress, or by the committees formed or to be formed. Should you take so unfriendly a part, we cannot answer for the consequences; on the contrary, if you and our Indian brethren do not interfere in this controversy, you may promise yourselves all the protection that this House can afford you. The dispute is become so serious now, that we cannot silently permit our plans to be frustrated by our own countrymen.'

It does not appear, that any attempts were made by an armed force to seize or molest the superintendent, and his

fears, mingled perhaps with some slight chidings of conscience on his part, that he had been over zealous in what he called his official duty, were the only grounds of his alarm. The part he chose to take with the Indians, is shown in a letter from the Reverend Samuel Kirkland to the committee of Albany, dated at Cherry Valley, on the ninth of June. Mr Kirkland had been for many years a laborious and faithful missionary among the Oneida Indians, understood their language and character perfectly, and was greatly beloved by them.

'I am much embarrassed,' says he, 'at present. You have doubtless heard that Colonel Johnson has orders from government to remove the dissenting missionaries from the Six Nations, till the difficulties between Great Britain and the colonies are settled; in consequence of which he has forbidden my return to my people at Oneida. He has since given encouragement, that I may revisit them after the Congress is closed; but to be plain, I have no dependance at all on his promises of this kind. He appears unreasonably jealous of me, and has forbidden my speaking a word to the Indians, and threatened me with confinement if I transgress. All he has against me I suppose to be a suspicion, that I have interpreted to the Indians the doings of the Continental Congress, which has undeceived them, and too much opened their eyes for Colonel Johnson's purposes. I confess to you, gentlemen, that I have been guilty of this, if it be a transgression. The Indians found out that I had received the abstracts of said Congress, and insisted upon knowing the contents. I could not deny them, notwithstanding my cloth, though in all other respects I have been extremely cautious not to meddle in matters of a political nature. I apprehend that my interpreting the doings of the Congress to a number of their sachems has done more real good to the cause of the country, or the cause of truth and justice, than five hundred pounds in presents would have effected.'

About the same time the New York Congress received a letter from the Provincial Congress of South Carolina,

signed by William Henry Drayton, Arthur Middleton, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and others, enclosing a curious intercepted letter from General Gage to Governor Martin of North Carolina. 'We are to thank you,' say the above gentlemen, 'for your intelligence of the fifth ultimo, and do most heartily congratulate you upon that proper spirit, which now appears in your colony. The apprehension of a defection in you, which we are happy to find was unjustly formed, occasioned in us, and must undoubtedly have given to all America, inexpressible anxiety, and at the same time have encouraged the Ministry to proceed in their measures, as a proof of the confidence, which our enemies placed in you.' The intercepted letter from General Gage to Governor Martin was dated at Boston, April twelfth, that is, six days before the affair at Lexington, and was in the words following.

'Sir,

'Your letter of the 16th of March I have had the pleasure to receive, and am glad to hear that many of the people in your province are beginning to find they have been misled, and that they seem inclined to disengage themselves from the arbitrary power of the Continental Congress, and of their committees. I wish I could say as much for the people of this province, who are more cool than they were, but their leaders, by their arts and artifices, still keep up that seditious and licentious spirit, that has led them on all occasions to oppose government, and even to acts of rebellion. The late accounts from England have embarrassed their councils much. They have applied to the New England governments, and doubtless will to those at the southward, to assist them, but I hope the madness of the latter is wearing off, and that they will get no encouragement from thence.

'This province has some time been, and now is, in the new-fangled legislature, termed a Provincial Congress, who seem to have taken the government into their hands. What they intend to do I cannot pretend to say, but they are much puzzled how to act. Fear in some, and a want of inclination

in others, will be a great bar to their coming to extremities, though their leaders use every measure to bring them into the field. I have the honor to be, &c.

'THOMAS GAGE.'

There is not probably on record a more remarkable document than this letter, as showing to what degree the British rulers in this country were ignorant of the state of opinion among the people, and the spirit with which they were animated. From such sources how was it possible, that the nation or the Ministry in England should be correctly informed, or have any just conceptions of the true condition of affairs in America? By this letter we may judge of the tenor of General Gage's despatches to his government, upon which they were to found their decisions and adopt their measures. Almost while he was writing, 'that fear and want of inclination' would prevent the Americans from 'coming to extremities,' they met in the field a large detachment of the British army at Lexington and Concord, and two months afterwards the battle of Bunker's Hill was fought; and the 'new-fangled legislature,' puzzled as they were, had assembled and organized a force sufficient to shut up the British commander and all his troops within the lines of Boston.*

In addition to their correspondence with other colonies, the

---

* In the public offices in London I have been favored with the perusal of all the original despatches of General Gage to the government, while he had command of the British forces in Boston, and it is perhaps enough to say, that, in their general spirit and character, they accord very exactly with this letter to the Governor of North Carolina. General Gage seems to have deceived himself at all points, and to have been unaccountably ignorant of the state of public feeling and opinion in the colonies, and of the progress that was making in the preparations for union and resistance. The Ministry depended on the information communicated by him, and laid their plans accordingly. After knowing the nature and substance of his communications, the wonder at the extraordinary measures pursued during the first stages of the contest is much diminished.

Provincial Congress of New York steadily pursued their deliberations, devising such means of defence as the time and circumstances would allow, and adhered promptly to all the recommendations of the Continental Congress. Encouragements were proposed for erecting powder mills, a bounty of five pounds was offered for every hundred pounds of powder manufactured in the colony, and twenty pounds for every hundred muskets over and above the regular market price of these articles. Resolves were passed for fortifying the Highlands, and the positions about Kingsbridge, and committees appointed to examine the grounds, and report a system of operations. Philip Schuyler and Richard Montgomery were unanimously nominated, the first as a Major General, and the second as a Brigadier, in the army of the continent, and these nominations were confirmed by the national Congress.

The want of money was severely felt, and seemed to threaten a stop to every movement. This afforded an opportunity for the members to strengthen their confidence with the people, by exhibiting a proof of patriotism, commonly the last that will bear a severe test. The Assembly in its corporate character had a dubious credit, which could untie few purse strings, and on several occasions the members pledged themselves, *in their individual names*, as security for money borrowed. Loan offices, or rather subscription funds, were opened by the county committees, and small sums were raised in this way on the credit of the government, but they were rather the contributions of sanguine zeal, than the aids of confident expectation. These embarrassments were at length relieved, by the emission of the continental currency, and its distribution among the colonies.

A subject, which occupied more than any other the attention of the New York Congress, and which seems to have been considered by them the most important that came under their notice, was a plan of reconciliation with England. No doubt was expressed, none was probably entertained, that such a plan must at last be fallen upon, which would meet the

views of both parties, and they thought it necessary to compare and mature their sentiments on a matter of such vital interest, that, when the proper time should arrive, they might be ready to act with decision and promptness. By a formal resolve, however, at the outset, they disavow any intention to interfere with the General Congress in this respect, and declare their only purpose to be, that of ascertaining the united sentiments of their own body, and communicating them for the use of their delegates.

After these preliminaries, a committee was appointed to draft and report a plan. Of this committee Mr Morris was a member, as he was indeed of almost every committee for general and weighty objects. When the report came before the House, it was examined minutely, and debated article by article, apparently in a spirit of concession and harmony. Mr Morris took an active and leading part in the debates, and some important features were introduced at his instance. At last, on the 27th of June, when the field of discussion had been traversed in every direction, numerous amendments proposed, some adopted and others rejected, the plan assumed its final shape, and the Congress of New York resolved, that they were prepared to settle all differences with Great Britain on the following terms.

'1. That all the statutes and parts of statutes of the British Parliament, which are held up for repeal by the late Continental Congress in their Association, dated the twentieth day of October, 1774, and all the statutes of the British Parliament, passed since that day, restraining the trade and fishery of the colonies on this continent, ought to be repealed.

'2. That from the necessity of the case, Britain ought to regulate the trade of the whole empire for the general benefit of the whole, and not for the separate interest of any particular part, and that, from the natural right of property, the powers of taxation ought to be confined to the colony legislatures respectively.

'3. Therefore, that the moneys raised as duties on the

regulations of trade ought to be paid into the respective colony treasuries, and be subject to the disposal of their deputies.

'4. That in those colonies, whose representatives in general assembly are now chosen for a greater term than three years, such assemblies ought in the future not to exceed that term.

'5. That the colonists are ready and willing to support the civil government within the respective colonies, and on proper requisitions to assist in a general defence of the empire, in as ample a manner as their respective abilities will admit.

'6. That if objections be made, that a resort to a variety of colony legislatures for general aids is inconvenient, and that large unappropriated grants to the crown from America would endanger the liberty of the empire; then,

'7. The colonies are willing to assent to a continental Congress, deputed from the several colonies to meet with a president appointed by the crown, for the purpose of raising and apportioning their general aids upon application made by the crown, according to the advice of the British Parliament, to be judged of by the said Congress.

'8. And as the free enjoyment of the rights of conscience is of all others the most valuable branch of human liberty, and the indulgence and establishment of popery all along the interior confines of the old Protestant Colonies tends not only to obstruct their growth, but to weaken their security, that neither the Parliament of Great Britain, nor any other earthly legislature or tribunal, ought or can interfere or interpose in anywise howsoever in the religious and ecclesiastical concerns of the colonies.

'9. That the colonies respectively are entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation within themselves respectively, in all cases of internal polity whatsoever, subject only to the negative of their sovereign in such manner as has been heretofore accustomed.'

This report was accompanied with a resolution, offered by Mr Morris, which provided that no one article should be considered so essential to the others, as to exclude the idea of accommodation without such article, and that no part of the report should be obligatory on the representatives in the Continental Congress. Hence the report was reduced to a mere expression of opinion, which he avows to be the design of his resolution, since to send such an instrument in the nature of instructions would embarrass rather than aid their exertions in that body. There is room to believe, that Mr Morris was not well satisfied with the articles themselves, nor with the project of drawing up a series of propositions, in the nature of a creed, on this subject by a colonial Assembly, and that he took this method of neutralizing any ill effects, which might possibly grow out of them, if left in their original meaning and purpose.

In the letter to their delegates, enclosing the above report, the Congress write; 'We must now repeat to you the common and just observation, that contests for liberty, fostered in their infancy by the virtuous and wise, become sources of power to wicked and designing men. Whence it follows, that such controversies, as we are now engaged in, frequently end in the demolition of those rights and privileges, which they were instituted to defend. We pray you, therefore, to use every effort for the compromising of this unnatural quarrel between the parent and child, and, if such terms as you may think best shall not be complied with, earnestly to labor, that at least some terms may be held up, whereby a treaty shall be set on foot to restore peace and harmony to our country, and spare the further effusion of human blood.'

The representatives in reply, after acknowledging the receipt of this letter, with the enclosed plan of accommodation, add; 'Deeply sensible of the calamities of a civil war, we have nothing more at heart than to be instrumental in compromising this unnatural quarrel between the two countries, on the solid basis of mutual justice and constitutional liberty, and

the most strenuous efforts on our part shall be exerted with unremitting ardor to accomplish this salutary purpose. We acknowledge, with the utmost gratitude, the deference you are pleased to pay to our judgment, and your delicacy in leaving us unrestrained in a point of all others the most essential to yourselves and your posterity, to the continent of America, and to the whole British Empire; and happy shall we esteem ourselves, if, in the discharge of this difficult and arduous trust, we shall merit your approbation, and the confidence of the country.'

A postscript is added to this letter, in the hand writing of Mr Jay, but signed by all the delegates, respecting the clause on ecclesiastical concerns. 'As the inhabitants of the colonies,' say they, 'are happily united in a *political creed*, we are of opinion that it would be highly imprudent to run the risk of dividing them by the introduction of disputes foreign, to the present controversy, especially as the discussion of them can be attended with no one single advantage. They are points about which man will forever differ, and therefore should always, and at least in times like these, be kept out of sight. We are the more confirmed in these sentiments by this circumstance, that both this and the former Congress have cautiously avoided the least hint on subjects of this kind, all the members concurring in a design of burying all disputes on ecclesiastical points, which have for ages had no other tendency, than that of banishing peace and charity from the world.' On these considerations the delegates state, that they have unanimously agreed to be silent as to that article.

It may be thought strange, that any one should be alarmed at the idea of 'the indulgence and the establishment of popery, all along the interior confines of the old Protestant colonies.' But this alludes to a bill, which had been recently passed by the British Parliament for the government of Canada, commonly called the '*Quebec Bill*,' granting extraordinary privileges to the Catholic clergy, and of which the obvious policy was to conciliate the Canadians through the influence of the priests, and unite them against the other

colonies. The bill caused much excitement in England, and its enemies affirmed, that it made the Romish church predominant by law in Canada, and allowed no more than a toleration to the Protestant faith. To the people of New York the bill seemed fraught with special danger, on account of their proximity to Canada, and the long line of frontiers by which the two provinces were joined. We hence perceive the reason why the above clause was introduced.*

While the Congress were engaged in debating the scheme of accommodation, they heard that General Washington was on his way from Philadelphia, to take command of the continental army at Cambridge, and that he would pass through New York. A committee of four was appointed, of whom were

---

* In the archives of the Historical Society of New York, among many other valuable papers, there is a copy in manuscript of a remarkable letter from Edmund Burke, on the Quebec Bill, written to the Assembly of New York, immediately after it had been passed by Parliament. Mr Burke was then, and had been for nearly four years previously, agent in England for the colony of New York. He opposed the bill in all its stages, and this letter contains a history of its progress, and of his efforts to prevent its passage.

It may here be remarked, that Mr Burke's correspondence with the Assembly of New York, during his agency, from the time of his appointment, in December, 1770, till the dissolution of the Assembly, in April, 1775, has never been published. Nor indeed is any part of it known to exist in the United States, except the letter mentioned above. Could the whole now be found and brought before the public, it would doubtless present in a full and luminous manner the views of that able statesman, on all the important topics agitated at that time between Great Britain and the colonies, and prove a treasure of rare worth in the historical materials of the county. This correspondence has been studiously excluded from all the publications of his writings in England.

Could it be ascertained what became of the papers of the old colonial Assembly, after its career was terminated, the door of hope might not yet be closed against the possibility of these letters being discovered, but this is a subject on which the antiquaries of New York profess to be enveloped in as dark a mystery, as those of any other part of the globe. It should still be kept in remembrance, however, especially by the zealous and labor-loving members of the Historical Society.

General Montgomery and Mr Morris, to meet the commander in chief at Newark, and recommend to him the place, which they should deem 'most prudent' for crossing the Hudson.

At this moment the Congress was beset with a new difficulty. Governor Tryon still resided quietly in New York, and was considered, even by these representatives of the people, as the legal Governor, although they took care not to obey his authority, nor to show any other symptoms of allegiance, than outward respect, and a vigilant caution, that his person should not be molested. It so happened, that at the very time they were informed of General Washington's arrival at Newark, by a letter from General Schuyler, they also heard that Governor Tryon was at Paulus Hook, and the alarming probability was, that he and General Washington would come together at that place. To meet so ominous a crisis required more deliberation and forethought, than the Assembly had at command. But no time was to be lost, and they resorted to the following expedient. 'Colonel Jasper was called in, and requested to send on one company of the militia to Paulus Hook, to meet the Generals; that he have another company at the side of the ferry for the same purpose; and that he have the residue of his battalions ready to receive either the Generals or Governor Tryon, whichever shall first arrive, and wait on both, as well as circumstances will allow.' No other embarrassment seems to have occurred; the Governor and the General spared themselves the awkwardness of an interview; and on the next day Washington met the Congress, according to a previous arrangement with Mr Morris and Mr Low, when addresses of congratulation and civility were exchanged, in which there was nothing remarkable, except the pointed hint from the Congress to the commander in chief, that, 'when the contest should be decided *by an accommodation with the mother county*, he should resign the important deposit committed to his hands.' He was then escorted out of the city, by several companies of the militia of New York, and a troop of light-horse, which had accompanied him from Philadelphia.

CHAPTER IV.

TICONDEROGA.—ETHAN ALLEN.—STATE OF AFFAIRS ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN.—VISIT OF ALLEN AND WARNER TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS AND THE CONGRESS OF NEW YORK.—AUTHORIZED TO RAISE A REGIMENT OF GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS.—EMISSION OF MONEY BY NEW YORK.—GENERAL WOOSTER MARCHES HIS FORCES TO HAERLEM.—COMMITTEE OF SAFETY.—ITS ORGANIZATION AND POWERS.—UNPOPULAR MEASURE OF ATTEMPTING TO SEIZE THE ARMS OF DISAFFECTED PERSONS.—AFFAIR WITH THE ARMED SHIP ASIA, IN THE HARBOR OF NEW YORK.—CAPTAIN SEARS.—DESTRUCTION OF RIVINGTON'S PRINTING PRESSES.—EXCITEMENT OCCASIONED BY THAT ADVENTURE.

The state of affairs at Ticonderoga demanded the early attention of the New York Congress. That fortress had been taken on the tenth of May, by a small body of forces partly from Connecticut, partly from Massachusetts, but chiefly from the settlements in the New Hampshire Grants, under the command of Ethan Allen. It is true, that Arnold had set off upon the same adventure, with a colonel's commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, then sitting at Cambridge, but he overtook the party on its march, and arrived only in time to quarrel with Allen, by setting up pretensions to command over him, in virtue of the new commission, which he brought in his pocket, although not a soldier came with him, and he was beyond the limits of the power from which he derived his military rank. Neither Allen nor his men were disposed to acknowledge his authority, and he went on with the party as a volunteer.

Ticonderoga being within the bounds of New York, it devolved on the authority of that colony to take it in custody, and, in compliance with a recommendation of the Continental Congress, they removed the cannon and stores to the south end of Lake George. This was easily effected, but they had no military force to take possession of the fort, not a man as yet

having been raised in the colony, nor any arrangements made for that object. Arnold and Allen took possession of Crown Point and St John's, and for a few days they held a sort of divided reign on the lake, Arnold as commander of a sloop and a schooner, which were converted into armed vessels, and Allen as a self-constituted General in chief of the land forces. Arnold soon grew dissatisfied, and returned to the army in Cambridge. Allen remained at Ticonderoga till the middle of June, and contrived to keep together a small force there, consisting of volunteers from the thinly populated regions in that neighborhood.

The following extracts of a characteristic letter from Allen to the New York Congress will show what projects he entertained, and will probably afford some indication of the views of the people generally on the northern frontiers.

'Crown Point, June 2d, 1775.

'Gentlemen,

'Before this time you have undoubtedly received intelligence, not only of the taking of the fortified places on Lake Champlain, and also the armed sloop and boats therein, and the taking possession of a schooner, which is the property of Major Skene, which has been armed and manned, and of the conversion of them, with a large train of artillery, to the defence of the liberty and the constitutional rights of America. You have likewise undoubtedly been informed, that the expedition was undertaken at the special encouragement and request of a number of respectable gentlemen in the colony of Connecticut. The pork forwarded to subsist the army by your directions evinces your approbation of the procedure; and as it was a private expedition, and common fame reports that there is a number of overgrown tories in the province, you will the readier excuse me in not taking your advice in the matter, lest the enterprise might have been prevented by their treachery. It is here reported, that some of them have been converted, and that others have lost their influence.

'If in those achievements there be anything honorary, the subjects of your government, namely, the New Hampshire settlers, are justly entitled to a large share, as they had a great majority of the soldiery, as well as the command, in making those acquisitions; and as you justify and approve the same, I expect you already have or soon will lay before the grand Continental Congress, the great disadvantage it must inevitably be to the colonies to evacuate Lake Champlain, and give up to the enemies of our country those invaluable acquisitions, the key either of Canada or of our own country, according to which party holds the same in possession, and makes a proper improvement of it. The key is ours as yet, and provided the colonies would suddenly push an army of two or three thousand men into Canada, they might make a conquest of all that would oppose them, in the extensive province of Quebec, unless reinforcements from England should prevent it. Such a division would weaken General Gage, or insure us Canada. I would lay my life on it, that with fifteen hundred men I could take Montreal. Provided I could be thus furnished, and an army could take the field, it would be no insuparable difficulty to take Quebec.

'This object should be pursued, though it should take ten thousand men, for England cannot spare but a certain number of her troops; nay, she has but a small number that are disciplined, and it is as long as it is broad, the more that are sent to Quebec, the less they can send to Boston, or any other part of the continent. And there will be this unspeakable advantage, in directing the war into Canada, that instead of turning the Canadians and Indians against us, as is wrongly suggested by many, it would unavoidably attach and connect them to our interest. Our friends in Canada can never help us, until we first help them, except in a passive or inactive manner. There are now about seven hunded regular troops in Canada.

'It may be thought, that to push an army into Canada would be too premature and imprudent. If so, I propose to make a

stand at the Isle Aux Noix, which the French fortified by entrenchments the last war, and greatly fatigued our large army to take it. It is about fifteen miles on this side of St John's, and is an island in the river, on which a small artillery placed would command it. An establishment on a frontier, so far north, would not only better secure our own frontier, but put it in our power better to work our policy with Canadians and Indians, or, if need be, to make incursions into the territory of Canada, the same as they could into our country, provided they had the sovereignty of Lake Champlain, and had erected head quarters at or near Skenesborough. Our only having it in our power, thus to make incursions into Canada, might probably be the very reason, why it would be unnecessary so to do, even if the Canadians should prove more refractory than I think for.

'Lastly, I would propose to you to raise a small regiment of rangers, which I could easily do, and that mostly in the counties of Albany and Charlotte, provided you should think it expedient to grant commissions, and thus regulate and put them under pay. Probably you may think this an impertinent proposal. It is truly the first favor I ever asked of the government, and, if granted, I shall be zealously ambitious to conduct for the best good of my country, and the honor of the government. I am, Gentlemen, &c.

'ETHAN ALLEN.'*

---

* Two days after this letter was written, Allen sent a sort of proclamation into Canada, commencing, 'To our worthy and respectable Friends and Countrymen, the French People of Canada, greeting.' The paper was signed, 'Ethan Allen and James Easton, at present the principal Commanders of the Army.' Easton was from Massachusetts, whence he had led forty-six men, who assisted at the capture of Ticonderoga.

Their proclamation was intended to be of a conciliatory nature to the Canadians, advising them to keep out of the quarrel. 'You are very sensible,' say they, 'that war has already commenced between Eng-

The temper and sentiments of this letter were in direct opposition to the views of the persons, to whom it was addressed. They had several days before passed strong resolves, disapproving and disavowing any hostile intentions against Canada, and, with a warmth not usual in deliberative bodies, had 'declared to the world, that they considered every such step as infamous, and highly inimical to all the American colonies,' and they appointed a committee, of whom Gouverneur Morris was chairman, to draw up a letter to be sent to the Canadians, assuring them that no hostile designs were entertained against their persons, liberty, or property.

The Continental Congress, also, made a similar declaration, and ordered it to be transmitted to Canada. It may be imagined, therefore, that Ethan Allen's letter met with no welcome reception. And yet, within two months and a half after it was written, a formidable expedition was ordered into Canada, under the command of the brave and ill-fated Montgomery, and on grounds precisely similar to those stated by Allen. His advice, as events turned out, although looked upon at the time as wild and visionary, was the best that could be followed. Had such forces, as could easily have been gathered from Connecticut and Massachusetts, been marched into Canada immediately after the reduction of the posts on Lake Champlain, they would have made an easy conquest of the

---

land and the colonies. To fight the King's troops has become a necessary and incumbent duty. The colonies cannot avoid it. But pray, is it necessary that the Canadians and the inhabitants of the English colonies should butcher one another? God forbid. There are no controversies subsisting between you and them. Nay, let old England and the colonies fight it out, and you Canadians stand by, and see what an arm of flesh can do.' They complain, also, that a reconnoitering party of four men had been attacked, by about thirty Canadians 'and fired upon and pursued, till the reconnoitering party was obliged to return the fire.' This proclamation was sent by a trusty messenger to Montreal, with directions to have it circulated as widely as possible.

whole province, and saved the country from the disastrous issues of the campaign under Montgomery and Arnold, in which courage and suffering, almost without parallel, served only to aggravate the calamities of defeat and death. But the spirit of the nation was not yet ripe for such a step; the lingering hope of a speedy accommodation dwelt in the minds of many; doubts, as to the result of a serious contest, quickened the fears and subdued the resolution of others; and all were satisfied, that a show of strong measures, without unanimity and firmness, would be premature, futile, or perhaps dangerous in its effects. The battle of Bunker's Hill produced a change in this respect, nor till after that event can the nation be said to have confided in itself, imbibed a thorough distrust of English counsels, and a wavering faith in the terror of an English army.

As no troops were raised in New York, till some time after the capture of Ticonderoga, the Congress requested the government of Connecticut to send forces to that place. In this colony the governor and legislature had, from the beginning, acted in concert with Massachusetts. Soldiers had been levied, military arrangements formed, and means provided for defraying the expense. This request of New York, therefore, was immediately complied with, and on the thirtieth of May, Governor Trumbull ordered one thousand men to march to Lake Champlain, under Colonel Hinman; who arrived at Ticonderoga about the middle of June, and remained in command, till he was superseded by General Schuyler, a month afterwards. Soldiers only were furnished by Connecticut, provisions and other supplies by New York.

Ethan Allen, on the arrival of Colonel Hinman, found himself without command or employment. In company with Seth Warner, an officer and associate in arms, he made a visit to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, for the double purpose of procuring pay for the soldiers, who had been acting under him, and authority for raising a body of men, on the plan of the regiment of rangers proposed in his letter to the New York Congress. Allen and Warner were

introduced at the bar of the Continental Congress, where they gave information of what had been done, in taking and maintaining the posts on Lake Champaign. Payment of their demand was then ordered, and a resolution passed, recommending to the Congress of New York, on consulting with General Schuyler, 'to employ in the army about to be raised those called Green Mountain Boys, under such officers as the said Green Mountain Boys should choose.' With this recommendation, Allen and Warner presented themselves to the New York Congress. A motion to admit them to an audience was debated, which met with a good deal of opposition, but was at length carried by a small majority.

For many years Allen had acted a bold and forward part in the controversy, which had been carried on between New York, and the people settled in the New Hampshire Grants, concerning the title to those lands, and the right of sovereignty over the possessors. His zeal, energy, and talent had made him a leader in that affair, and the inhabitants were chiefly guided by his counsels. He wrote their addresses, protests, and appeals, which were alike remarkable for shrewdness, strong sense, vigor of thought, and a defiance of all the known rules of syntax and orthography. But anomolies in grammar, and errors of taste, did not diminish the effects of his uncultivated and nervous eloquence on the minds of the people for whom he wrote. He thus acquired an influence and notoriety, which had operated much to his disadvantage in the estimation of the New Yorkers. The Congress prevailed on themselves to overcome this impression, so far as to sanction his project of raising a regiment of soldiers, and authorized the enlisting of five hundred men, who were to choose their own officers.

Allen and Warner returned home together, but a quarrel arose between them, which caused dissensions among the people, and retarded the enlisting of the regiment. In the end, Allen either withdrew, or was passed over by the people, and the choice of a chief in command fell on Warner, with

the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.* In literary attainments Warner was considerably below Allen, but he possessed strong native powers, courage, coolness, and other qualifications for command in a subordinate sphere. He and his mountaineers rendered good service during the war, particularly in the battles of Hubbardton and Bennington.

Meantime the Congress had made considerable progress in raising and organizing a battalion, consisting of four regiments, for the continental service, greatly embarrassed, however, for the want of money, clothing, arms, ammunition, and other materials for equipping an army and preparing it for the field. While General Schuyler was pressing for reinforcements at Ticonderoga, the New York Committee of Safety, then sitting in the recess of the Congress, replied to him as if in despair. 'Our troops can be of no service to you; they have no arms, clothes, blankets, or ammunition, the officers no commissions, our treasury no money, and ourselves in debt.' But things mended daily, and before the first of October the troops were nearly all ready, and sent to the northward.

It was found impossible to procure money from the Continental Congress, in such quantities as were necessary, and on the second of September, an emission of one hundred and twelve thousand five hundred dollars was resolved upon, which was promised to be redeemed within the two years following, by taxes to be levied for the purpose. New regulations for the militia were also instituted, in the forming of which Mr Morris had taken a principal part.

As early as the middle of June a rumor was spread, that a regiment of British troops from Ireland would soon be landed

---

* The election was not made by the soldiers of the regiment, but by the committees of the several townships in the New Hampshire Grants, on the west side of the Green Mountains, assembled at Dorset, July twenty-seventh, 1775. Samuel Safford was at the same time chosen Major. All the officers were commissioned by the New York Congress.

in New York, and the Congress applied to General Wooster, then commanding the Connecticut forces at Greenwich, to march into New York as a security against an apprehended invasion. The government of Connecticut acceded to this requisition, and General Wooster took up his quarters near Haerlem, within five miles of the city, where he and his army remained for several weeks. At the request of the Congress, General Wooster went over, also, with a detachment of his men to the eastern part of Long Island, to protect the inhabitants against the incursions of the enemy, who came there to take off cattle and other provisions for the British army in Boston. A more efficient system for regulating the commerce of New York, was likewise adopted, and from that time a rigid inspection of the entrances and clearances of vessels was kept up, and the navigation of the colony was subjected to the control of the new government. Mr Morris was on a committee appointed to draw up regulations for this purpose.

The New York Congress continued in session, except a recess of a few days in July, till the 2d of September, when they adjourned for a month, entrusting the management of affairs in the mean time to a *Committee of Safety*, delegated from their own numbers. This expedient was always adopted at an adjournment, so that a responsible body representing the people was at all times in session. The powers of the Committee of Safety were prescribed by the Congress before they separated, and the mode of its organization. These varied at different times, but the general principles were the same. Three members from New York, having together two votes, and one member from each of the other counties, having each one vote, constituted this provisional government, called a Committee of Safety. But no members were restricted from attending the Committee and voting, the rule being constantly observed, that however many members might be present, the sum of their votes should be reckoned no higher than the proportion assigned to the county, which they represented. It frequently happened, after an adjournment, that a

quorum of the Congress could not be convened for several days, and in such cases the members present would assemble, and act as a Committee of Safety. Sometimes during the regular sitting of Congress the attendance would be so thin, that they could not act in that capacity, and they would resolve themselves into a committee for the day, or till the House should become full enough to permit them to go back again into the more dignified form of a congress. In this way no time was lost, and the public business was never neglected.

The Committee of Safety were empowered to carry into effect the previous resolves of the Congress, to open and answer letters, to take measures for executing the orders and recommendations of the Continental Congress, to superintend the military affairs of the colony, to comply with the requisitions of the generals of the continental army, to appropriate money for the public service, and to summon a meeting of the Congress, at such time and place as they should think necessary. Armed with these powers, they contrived to keep the wheels of government in motion, and for the most part to satisfy the people.

This Committee, however, which was appointed on the 2d of September, resorted to one measure, that proved unpopular, and caused a good deal of excitement. Many of the soldiers, enlisted into the continental service in New York, were without arms, and all efforts to purchase them in a sufficient number had failed. To remedy this defect, the committee issued an order, 'that all such arms, as are fit for the use of the troops raised in this colony, which shall be found in the hands or custody of any person, who has not signed the general Association, *shall be impressed* for the use of the said troops.' To carry this order into effect, persons were sent out with instructions to seize and collect arms, to have them appraised, and to give a certificate of their value to their owners, who were to be paid for them out of the treasury of the colony, if they should not be returned before the unhappy controversy with Great Britain was brought to a close. The per-

sons thus disarmed were, moreover, exempt from militia duty. The reception, which this order met with among the people, may be imagined by an extract from a letter to the Committee, dated Jamaica, Long Island, September 25th.

'I have endeavored in the towns of Jamaica and Hampstead to carry the resolutions of the Congress into execution, but without the assistance of the battalion, I shall not be able to do it to any good purpose. The people conceal all their arms, that are of any value. Many declare that they know nothing about the Congress, nor do they care anything for the orders of the Congress, and say that they would sooner lose their lives than give up their arms, and that they would blow any man's brains out, who should attempt to take them away. We find that there is a number of arms, that belong to the county, in the hands of the people. Some persons are so hardy and daring, as to go into the houses of those that are friendly, and take away by force those county arms, which our friends have received from the clerk of the county. We are told, that the people have been collecting together in sundry places armed, and firing their muskets by way of bravado.'

The Committee reasoned but imperfectly from the facts of history, and the principles of human nature, when they supposed that people, with arms in their hands, would be tempted to resign them, by such motives as were held out. They must either be treated as friends or enemies. If friends, their safety and interest required that the soldiers, who were to protect their property, and defend their rights, should be armed, and the call of patriotism would be the loudest that could be made to them. While deaf to this call, they would ~~made to~~ listen to the orders of a committee, or the resolves of a congress. If enemies, the sense of present danger, operating on the first law of nature, would prompt them to keep within their power their only sure means of defence. In either case, the idea of taking away their arms, by a compulsory impressment, had little to recommend it, either in policy or prudence. Indeed, the project was soon abandoned, for when the Congress

assembled again, the subject came before them, and a resolution was passed disapproving the measure.

Another event of some magnitude occurred, during the adjournment of the Congress. The Mayor of New York attended at the door of the Committee, and, being admitted, gave information that Governor Tryon had sent for him the day before, and told him, that he had just received a letter from Lord Dartmouth, notifying him that orders had been given to the commanders of the King's ships in America, that, in case any more troops were raised, or fortifications erected, or the King's stores taken, they must consider such places as in a state of rebellion. This intelligence caused alarm, for his Majesty's ship of war Asia lay in the harbor, and had already been an object of terror to the inhabitants, from an apprehension, that the town would be set on fire by it. A serious affray had recently happened, between the commander of that ship, and a body of men sent by the Provincial Congress to withdraw the cannon at the battery. While engaged in this act the man-of-war fired upon them, and three persons were wounded. The Captain vindicated his conduct on the ground, that it was his duty to protect the property of the King; but the inhabitants affirmed, that the guns at the battery belonged to the province, and not to the King. The people were angry at what they deemed a wanton outrage, and seized two of the Asia's boats, which came ashore at different times, and destroyed them. One of them the Congress ordered to be rebuilt and restored, but, before it could be finished, it was secretly sawed in pieces by persons unknown.

But notwithstanding the exasperated state of public feeling, the Congress still allowed provisions to be carried to the Asia, which increased the irritation, and caused hard things to be said against them, for it was not easily discovered, by what rules of equity or policy those persons should be punished, who were detected in supplying the enemy's ships in Boston and other places, and at the same time the government itself should openly abet this practice in New York. General

Washington, and all the patriots out of New York, were indignant at this singular inconsistency, to call it by no worse name. It arose in part from timidity, but as much, perhaps, with some of the principal citizens, from the belief, that the cause would in the end suffer less by keeping in good humor with the ships of war in the harbor, than by running the hazard of having the town burned down, the lives of the inhabitants endangered, and their property destroyed. This is the only shadow of excuse, that can be conceived, for the pusillanimity of the Congress in tolerating such a procedure, and acting in contradiction to themselves. *

Captain Sears, who had been so conspicuous for his zeal and activity, and who was a member of the Provincial Con-

---

* The affair of the Asia with the people at the battery happened on the twenty-third of August. The Congress, on the twenty-seventh, after censuring the conduct of Captain Vandeput, commander of the Asia, proceeded to resolve, that nobody should supply the King's ships with provisions, *except* Abraham Lott, but that he should be allowed '*to supply all necessaries, as well fresh as salt, for the use of the said ships.*' And yet, three days afterwards, in a set of resolutions inflicting penalties on certain decriptions of people, it is declared, that 'if any persons or persons shall be found guilty, before the Committee of any city or county, of attempting to furnish the ministerial army or navy with provisions, or other necessaries, contrary to the resolutions of the Continental or of this Congress, such person or persons shall be punished at the discretion of the Committee, &c.' Hence, what was a crime everywhere else, was an allowable act in the harbor of New York.

Gordon says, that 'many of the New York Provincial Congress, if not the majority, were adjudged real tories; some, so deemed, might be only timid whigs.' Vol. ii. p. 175. This is too sweeping a charge. If there were any '*real tories*' in the Congress, the number was exceedingly small. It may indeed be doubted if there were any such, (except a very few, who seem to have withdrawn early, when they saw what course the Congress would take) but of 'timid whigs' there were not a few. It was not a time for men to conceal their sentiments, and the committees, who were acting boldly and ardently on the side of liberty, would never have chosen a *professed tory*, or even a man of suspicious principles, to represent their interests.

gress, not finding the temperament of public feeling in New York to rise fast enough for the warmth of his own, had retired into Connecticut, and joined himself to the more sanguine partizans of freedom in that colony. About this time, Rivington, the publisher of a newspaper in New York, ventured to make his journal the vehicle of sentiments extremely offensive to the liberal party, and this without receiving any check, or drawing down any rebukes, from the Congress, or any other constituted authority. Such a tame submission to the impudence and insult of a printer, was more than Sears and his Connecticut associates could brook. On the twenty-third of November, a company of light-horse from Connecticut, seventy-five in number, armed with muskets and bayonets, with Captain Sears at their head, marched into New York at noonday, proceeded to Rivington's house, broke his presses, and seized and carried off in triumph the guilty types, which had been the passive instruments of the printer's insolence, nor stopped with them till safely deposited within the Connecticut borders, where they were melted into bullets. In returning through Westchester county, these men seized also upon the clergyman of the parish, and one of the justices of the peace, suspected of tory principles, and made them the unwilling companions of their journey, during the rest of their retreat.

This effort of the Connecticut knight-errants gave deep umbrage to the New York Congress, who fancied it to be not only a trampling upon their authority, but a reproach to their vigilance. They addressed a letter of solemn remonstrance to the Governor of Connecticut, and wrote to their delegates in Philadelphia, requesting that the affair might be brought before the Continental Congress. They complain to Governor Trumbull of Connecticut, 'that they cannot but consider such intrusions, as an invasion of their essential rights as a distinct colony,' and add, 'that common justice obliges them to request, that all the types should be returned to the chairman of the General Committee of the city and county of New York.' They add again, 'we beg you will not consider this requisition

as an attempt to justify the man, from whom the types were taken; we are fully sensible of his demerits, but earnestly wish that the glory of the present contest may not be sullied, by an attempt to restrain the freedom of the press.'*

Governor Trumbull wrote in reply, 'that the proper resort for a private injury must be to the courts of law, which are the only jurisdictions that can take notice of violences of this kind.' If it is to be viewed in a public light at all, the Governor continued, 'the head and leader of the whole transaction was a respectable member of your city and Congress, whom we consider as the proper person to whom the whole transaction is imputable, and who belongs, and is amenable to, your jurisdiction alone, and therefore the affair cannot be considered as an intrusion of our people into your province, but as a violence or disorder happening among yourselves.' Thus the two colonies were at issue, but as Rivington went off to Eng-

---

* And yet it would seem, that the Congress itself had not been wholly guiltless of this offence in the case of Rivington. Some months before, he had been in custody by their order, as may be confirmed by an extract from their records, dated June 7th, 1775, in these words.

'Whereas James Rivington of this city, printer, has signed the general Association, and lately published a handbill declaring his intention rigidly to adhere to the said Association, and also asked the pardon of the public, who have been offended *by his ill judged publication;* resolved, therefore, that the said James Rivington be permitted to return to his house and family, and that this Congress do recommend to the inhabitants of this colony, not to molest him in his person or property.'

After the destruction of his presses and types, Rivington went to England, but returned, when the British had established themselves in New York, and commenced his paper anew, under the title of '*Rivington's Royal Gazette*,' which he continued to the end of the war, having obtained the appointment of King's printer. He remained in New York after the war, and endeavored to keep up his paper, changing the title to '*Rivington's New York Gazette*.' Such was the popular odium against him, for the part he had taken, that his paper met with little support, and it soon came to an end.

land, and more important matters pressed upon the notice of the public, nothing more seems to have been done in the affair.

The delegates in the Continental Congress say in reply, 'We highly applaud the spirited, and at the same time, respectful manner, in which you have supported the dignity and independency of our colony, and demanded reparation on the subject of the Connecticut inroad. An interposition so rash, officious, and violent, gave us great anxiety, as it was not only a high insult to your authority, but had a direct tendency to confirm that fatal spirit of jealousy, and distrust of our eastern brethren, which has done so much injury to our cause, and which every wise and virtuous patriot should study to suppress.' They forbore, however, to bring the subject before Congress, as their constituents had desired, not doubting that justice would be rendered by Connecticut, and means be used to prevent similar encroachments in future.*

---

* In a letter from Mr Jay to the President of the Provincial Congress, dated Philadelphia, November 26th, three days after the occurrence took place, the writer says,—'The New England exploit is much talked of, and conjectures are numerous, as to the part the Convention will take relative to it. Some consider it as an ill compliment to the government of the province, and prophesy that you have too much christian meekness to take any notice of it. For my own part, I do not approve of the feat, and think it neither argues much wisdom, nor much bravery. At any rate, if it was to have been done, I wish our own people, and not strangers, had taken the liberty of doing it.

'I confess I am not a little jealous of the honor of the province, and I am persuaded, that its reputation cannot be maintained without some little spirit being mingled with its prudence.'

CHAPTER V.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.—DELEGATES TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.—PAY OF MEMBERS IN THAT BODY.—APPREHENSIONS OF AN ATTACK ON NEW YORK.—GENERAL CHARLES LEE TAKES COMMAND THERE.—PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE.—GENERAL LEE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH WASHINGTON.—POWER OF ARRESTING TORIES.—LORD STIRLING TAKES COMMAND IN NEW YORK—WASHINGTON'S ARRIVAL THERE.

Much inconvenience was felt in some parts of the colony, for the want of courts of justice, and the regular modes of process for the recovery of debts, and the punishment of civil misdemeanors. The Colonial Congress did not meddle in these matters. Disorders of course increased, as the authority of the old government declined, till a new system for the administration of justice was established, under the first constitution of the State. In the mean time, the old forms were allowed to be practised, where the officers chose to exercise their authority, and the people to obey. The laws in all civil concerns remained in force as heretofore, but, as many of the judges and other civil officers were royalists, and thereby odious to the inhabitants generally, they either forbore to execute the duties of their office, or, when they made the attempt, it was to little purpose. Some of the counties endeavored to remedy the inconvenience by local and temporary regulations, but these were not approved by the Congress. The only effectual remedy was the moderation of the people, and their acquiescence in a state of things, which time and events only could improve.

On the fourth of October the Congress met according to adjournment, but kept together only two days, when they

separated, or dissolved, with the design of completing the elections for a new Congress. The Committee of Safety continued its sittings as usual, and on the fourteenth of November, the day appointed for a reunion of the Congress, several members appeared, but not enough to form a quorum for business. In some counties there had been no elections, and in others there was a delay, which betrayed an indifference, that threatened to be fatal in its results. In this dilemma, the members of the Congress, then assembled, wrote a circular to the committees of the counties, where no elections had yet been held, requesting them to elect their delegates as speedily as possible, and send them forward. 'The evil consequences,' say they, 'that will attend the not having a Provincial Congress to determine on the measures, necessary to be adopted and carried into execution at this unhappy crisis, are more easily conceived than expressed; and, rest assured, gentlemen, that the neighboring colonies will not remain inactive spectators, if you show a disposition to depart from the continental union. You must suppose confusion and disorder, with numberless other evils, will attend the want of a Congress for the government of a colony, until a reconciliation with the mother country can be obtained. We beg you will consider this matter with that seriousness, which the peace, good order, and liberties of your country require.' This appeal was listened to, and, on the sixth of December the Congress commenced its proceedings, being the *second* Provincial Congress of New York.

This Congress was constructed on principles in some respects different from the former. Each county sent as many delegates as it pleased, and prescribed the number, that should make a quorum to vote. For instance, New York sent twenty-one delegates, and decided that seven should make a quorum, and when less than seven were present, no vote could be given for that county. The Congress settled their own rule of voting as heretofore, determining the number and ratio of votes for each county. No county had more than four votes, nor less than two. Tryon county chose two members, but

authorized one to represent the county, or to constitute a quorum for voting, so that when one of the members only was present, he had two votes, although from New York if there were not more than six present, they could have no vote. Members were allowed to sit in Congress, and to speak, and act on committees, even when there was not a sufficient representation from the county, to which they belonged, to form a quorum for voting. A majority of the counties made a quorum for business. This Congress was chosen for six months, from the tenth of November.

A question of some delicacy came up, respecting the delegation to the Continental Congress, with which the Provincial Congress found themselves a little perplexed. Twelve delegates had been chosen, by the Convention in April, to represent the colony of New York, of whom five were necessary to make a valid representation. On the 16th of October the delegates wrote to the New York Congress, stating that their number was reduced to five, so that in case of the sickness, or necessary absence of any one of them, the colony must remain unrepresented. To prevent such an accident, they suggested the expediency, of delegating the power to three, instead of five. After deliberating upon the matter, the Congress determined, that they had no right to make such a change, however much they might lament the untoward circumstance, that required it. 'When we consider,' they say, 'that twelve were originally designated, of whom five were to be a quorum, we necessarily suppose, that the last number was particularly pointed out, with a general view to the several members, and in the confidence that every five of them would be amply sufficient for that beneficial purpose. We cannot pretend, therefore, to lessen that number, unless indeed upon the most cogent necessity, and perhaps not then.'

This is another example of the extreme caution, with which the representatives of the people exercised their power, in all the gradations of the elective offices. And it may here be repeated, that the particularity with which elections were con-

ducted, from the smallest assemblages upward, and the special care which all men in office took not to go beyond the instructions, or the will, of their constituents, are the features most strongly marked in the machinery of government, which was then beginning its movements.

The delegates to the Continental Congress had been chosen for an unlimited time, or at least no term of duration was specified in their credentials. Of this omission they reminded the new Provincial Congress, and desired that no delicacy in regard to them might operate either to prevent, or influence, another appointment, as soon as it should be deemed proper.*

The two counties of Queen's and Richmond refused to send representatives to the Provincial Congress. The freeholders and inhabitants of those counties were called together, for the purpose of expressing their sense of this subject by a vote in

---

* The following letter from the New York delegates, dated November 3d, 1775, is somewhat curious, as showing the pay of the members from the different colonies, while attending the Continental Congress.

'We have been informed that the compensation for our expenses and loss of time is under your consideration, and as we presume an account of the provision made by the other colonies, for their respective delegates, would be agreeable to you, we take the liberty of subjoining it.

'Georgia,—£100 sterling to each delegate per month.

'South Carolina,—£300 to each for the last Congress.

'North Carolina,—£500 currency to each per year.

'Virginia,—a half Johannes per day to each.

'Maryland,—40 shillings to each per day Proclamation money.

'Pennsylvania,—20 shillings to each per day, besides the allowance to such of the members as come from the counties.

'Connecticut,—3 dollars to each per day for loss of time, besides all expenses, allowing each delegate a servant and two horses.

'Rhode Island,—exactly the same as Maryland.

'Massachusetts,—all expense as above, and 2 dollars to each per day.

'New Hampshire,—all expense as above, and half a guinea per day to each.'

It was decided to allow the New York delegates each 4 dollars per day.

the usual mode, and in each county a majority of the polls were against an election of deputies, alleging as a reason, that they had been disappointed in the hopes they entertained of the former Congress, and in their confident belief, that a plan of reconciliation with Great Britain would before that time have been effected. But the truth was, the inhabitants of these two counties had been tampered with, by the British men-of-war in the harbor of New York. They had been supplied with arms and ammunition from the Asia, and after Governor Tryon retired on board an armed ship, driven there, as he pretended, by the fear that his person was not safe on shore, he had an easy access through his influence, and by his local situation, to the people in those counties.

The Congress undertook to pass a censure upon the disaffected persons, who thus openly contemned their authority, and resolved that they had violated the general Association, that they should be put out of the protection of the Congress, that the names of the delinquents should be reported and published, and that all commercial intercourse between them and the other inhabitants should be cut off. This was a kind of *brutum fulmen*, which could do no harm to one party, and of course no good to the other. These persons neither expected nor desired any protection from the Congress, nor cared who knew their names; a commercial intercourse they wanted not, and the general Association they despised. The true secret of these imbecile proceedings is contained in the letter of the Congress to their delegates at Philadelphia, in which they say, that they have gone as far as a 'prudent regard' to the circumstances of the city would permi

The terrific apparition of a burning town haunted them day and night. They nourished the vipers in their bosom, and lived in a perpetual apprehension of their bite. 'The power which the King's ships have of destroying the property of the city,'—this was the pivot upon which the wheel of their policy turned, the star of ill omen, that never ceased to linger with portentous aspect in their vision, the axiom on which

were founded all their deliberations, resolves, and acts. Nor did it ever occur to them, that such a deed would be the greatest folly the British could commit, that the wanton burning of the town would kindle a flame of indignant feeling throughout the nation, which could not be quenched, and that it was not their purpose to multiply and exasperate enemies, but to preserve and conciliate friends. We are now arrived at a period, in which this feeble and fallacious policy of the New York Congress will be seen in still bolder relief.

In the month of December, it was discovered by certain indications in the British army at Boston, that preparations were making for fitting out a fleet, and sending off a detachment of soldiers, from that place. Their destination could only be conjectured, but as at that season it must necessarily be to the southward, it was supposed the most likely point was New York. As soon as General Washington was satisfied, that the embarkation would speedily take place, he resolved to despatch general Charles Lee to New York, with orders to take command of such forces as he could collect in Connecticut, and in that city, and prepare for such a defence as he should be able to make, against any hostile attempts of the enemy. Captain Sears, who had now found his way to Washington's camp, was sent forward to explain to Governor Trumbull the nature of the enterprise, and collect volunteers in Connecticut. General Lee left Cambridge on the 11th of January, with instructions from the commander in chief to repair to New York with such forces as he could rally on the way, and, when there, to call on the commander of the New Jersey troops for his aid, to put the city in the best posture of defence, which the season and circumstances would admit, to disarm persons on Long Island and elsewhere, known to be disaffected to the views of Congress, and to look into the condition of the fortifications on the North River. On the 16th of January, General Lee wrote to General Washington from New-Haven.

'Dear General,

'We have been so baffled by the weather, that we only arrived here last night. I believe we shall find no difficulties in procuring a sufficient body of volunteers for the New York expedition. The unhappy accounts from Canada seem to animate these people, rather than depress them. We have now occasion for exertion and decision. I am apprehensive that the Congress must be inspired by you. They have just given a strong, and, I think, unfortunate instance of indecision. Colonel Waterberry had raised a regiment. The regiment was equipped and ready for embarcation. They were to have landed in Oyster Bay, and to have attacked the tories on Long Island. Lord Stirling was to have attacked them on the other side,—all this by order of Congress; when suddenly Colonel Waterberry received an order to disband his regiment, and the tories are to remain unmolested, till they are joined by the King's assassins. Governor Trumbull, like a man of sense and spirit, has ordered this regiment to be reassembled. I believe it will be ready on Sunday, the day on which I shall march from this town.

'I shall send immediately an express to the Congress, informing them of my situation, and at the same time conjuring them, not to suffer the accursed provincial Congress of New York to defeat measures, so absolutely necessary to our salvation. The affairs of Canada I suppose will very soon, if not instantly, require a very considerable force from this province. Neither will the circumstances of New York admit of its being too much stripped of men, for which reason I should think it advisable, immediately, to raise some additional regiments in Massachusetts Bay. Adieu, dear General; God prosper you, and the arms of virtue. Yours most affectionately,

'Charles Lee.'

The intelligence of General Lee's destination reached New York, about the time of his arrival in New Haven, and it created a panic scarcely less agitating, than would have been produced by a discharge of fire rockets and hot shot from the

Asia itself. Several families instantly began to remove their effects from the city. As soon as the Committee of Safety came together, they resolved, that, in consequence of the alarm into which the inhabitants were thrown by the confident reports of the approach of General Lee, with a considerable body of troops, they were of opinion 'that it might occasion great difficulties and inconveniences to the residents of the city, should any body of forces arrive for active service, and it would tend to the peace and happiness of the inhabitants, for the Committee to obtain some information on the subject.' A letter was in consequence immediately written to General Lee, dated in Committee of Safety, January 21st, 1776, from which the following are extracts.

'The inhabitants of this city are much alarmed at various confident advices of your destination, with a considerable body of forces for active service here. Confident, however, as those advices may appear to people without doors, we cannot readily credit them, as we conceive it most probable, that were you preparing to execute any plan of that kind, it would be preceded by some intimations to us on the subject of Continental Congress, General Washington, or yourself. We therefore should not have troubled you with this application, had it not been to procure such information from you, as may enable us in a prudent use of it to allay the fears of our inhabitants, who, at this inclement season of the year, will continue, as they have already begun, to remove their women and children, and which, if continued, may occasion hundreds to perish for want of shelter.'

The Committee then proceed to state, that a want of powder is an inseparable bar to their making any active defence, that they have sent to foreign ports several adventures for purchasing powder, but without success, and that they are daily pushing similar adventures to the West Indies.

'The ships of war give no interruption to our vessels, despatched on these adventures, a favor we cannot expect, should hostilities begin, and even should we be fortunate enough to

oblige the ships of war to quit this port, by expending the little powder we have, an event which our most sanguine hopes cannot promise us, the attention of our enemies will effectually prevent our expected importation. For these reasons we conceive, that a just regard to the public cause and our duty require us to take a prudent care of this city, and dictate the impropriety of provoking hostilities at present, and the necessity of saving appearances with the ships of war, till at least the month of March.

'We, therefore, ardently wish to remain in peace for a little time, and doubt not we have assigned sufficient reasons for avoiding at present a dilemma, in which the present entrance of a large body of troops into this city will almost certainly involve us. Should you have such an entrance in design, we beg at least that the troops may halt on the western confines of Connecticut, till we shall have been honored by you, with such an explanation on this important subject, as you conceive your duty may permit you to enter into with us, the grounds of which you will easily see ought to be kept an entire secret.'

To this epistle, signed by Peter V. B. Livingston, chairman of the Committee of Safety, General Lee replied in another, dated at Stamford, January twenty-third, in which he expressed himself in the following manner.

'With respect, Sir, to the alarms of the inhabitants, on the suspicions that my business was to commence active hostilities against the men-of-war in your harbor, I can assure you, that they may be perfectly easy. Such never was the intention of the General, as I hope you will believe, that I never entertained a thought of transgressing the letter of my instructions. The motive of the General for detaching me was, solely to prevent the enemy from taking post in your city, or lodging themselves in Long Island, which we have the greatest reason to think, Sir, is their design. Some subordinate purposes were likewise to be executed, which are much more proper to communicate by word of mouth, than by writing;

but I give you my word, that no active service is proposed, as you seem to apprehend.

'If the ships of war are quiet, I shall be quiet, but I declare solemnly, that if they make a pretext of my presence to fire on the town, the first house set in flames by their guns shall be the funeral pile of some of their best friends. But I believe, Sir, the inhabitants may rest in security on this subject. I am convinced, and every member who considers a moment must be convinced, that the destruction of the seaport towns would, if possible, be a severer stroke to the Ministry and their instruments, than to the inhabitants themselves. The seaport towns are the only holds they have in America; they are considered as the pledges of servitude; the menacing of destruction to them may indeed be of admirable use, but the real destruction of them must extinguish all hopes of success.

'In compliance, Sir, with your request, I shall only carry with me into town a force just strong enough to secure it against any designs of the enemy, until it shall please the Continental Congress to take measures for its permanent security. The main body I shall leave on the western frontiers of Connecticut, according to your directions. I hope, Sir, and persuade myself, that the Committee and inhabitants can have no objection to this plan. If Mr Tryon, and the captains of the ships of war, are to prescribe what numbers are, and what numbers are not, to enter the town, they are absolute dictators to all intents and purposes. The condition is too humiliating for freemen to put up with.'

At the same time General Lee wrote to General Washington in the following terms.

'It was unnecessary sooner to trouble you with my scrawl, as I could give you no information the least interesting. I find the people through this province more alert, and more zealous, than my most sanguine expectations. I believe I might have collected ten thousand volunteers. I take only four companies with me, and Waterberry's regiment, which is so

happily situated on the frontier. Ward's regiment I have ordered to remain at their respective homes, until they hear further. These Connecticutians are, if possible, more eager to go out of their country, than they are to return home, when they have been out for any considerable time.

'Enclosed I send you my letter to the General Congress, and that of the Provincial Congress of New York to me, with my answer. I hope it will have your approbation. The whigs, I mean the stout ones, are, it is said, very desirous that a body of troops should march and be stationed in their city; the timid ones are averse, merely from the spirit of procrastination, which is the characteristic of timidity. The letter of the Provincial Congress, you will observe, breathes the very essence of this spirit,—it is wofully hysterical. I conclude I shall receive the orders of the General Congress, before, or immediately on, my arrival; otherwise I should not venture to march into the province, as, by their late resolve, every detachment of the continental troops is to be under the direction of the Provincial Congress, in which they are, a resolve, I must say, with submission to their wisdom, fraught with difficulties and evil. It is impossible, having two sovereigns, that any business should be carried on.'

As soon as General Lee's letter to the Continental Congress enclosing a copy of the letter of the Committee of Safety to him, reached Philadelphia, the New York delegates proposed that a committee should be appointed to proceed to New York, and confer with General Lee, as to the immediate objects of his enterprise, and the mode of prosecuting it in a manner acceptable to the inhabitants. This committee consisted of Messrs Harrison, Lynch, and Allen, and they arrived in New York on the 30th of January, two or three days before General Lee, who was detained on the road by indisposition. Meantime he sent forward seven hundred troops, under the command of Colonel Waterberry. A part of them arrived in town the day after the committee of the Continental Congress.

The New York Committee of Safety here found themselves

involved in a new difficulty, for they got into a debate about the disposition, which should be made of the troops on their arrival. Some were for having them stopped in their march, till a conference could be had with the committee of Congress, but this was carried in the negative; and finally it was decided, that the troops should be received, and lodged in the city barracks, on condition that they were to be under the direction of the Committee of Safety, till General Lee should arrive, and the matter should be finally arranged by a conference between him and the two committees. To this proposal the committee of the Continental Congress replied, that they could not undertake to put these troops under the direction of the Provincial Committee, or Congress, having no such power lodged in their hands by the Continental Congress. In the mean time Colonel Waterberry put an end to one part of the difficulty, for he informed them, that the troops were hourly expected, and that he should on their arrival march them immediately into the barracks, declaring that he had no authority to give up the control of the troops to the Committee, without orders from General Lee. It was at last agreed, that, by the credentials of the committee from the Continental Congress all the troops in New York were properly in the charge of the gentlemen of that committee, till General Lee's arrival. This event occurred on the fourth of February, when he wrote again to General Washington as follows.

'I arrived here yesterday, but not without some difficulty. My disorder increased, rather than diminished, so that I was under the necessity of being carried in a litter a considerable part of the way. I consider it as a piece of the greatest good fortune that the Congress have detached a committee to this place, otherwise I should have made a most ridiculous figure, besides bringing on myself the enmity of the whole province. My hands were effectually tied up, from taking any steps necessary for the public service, by the late resolve of the Congress, putting every detachment of the continental troops under the command of the Provincial Congress, where such detachment is.

'I should apprize you, that General Clinton arrived almost at the same instant with myself. He has brought no troops with him, and pledges his honor that none are coming. He says he is merely on a visit to his friend Tryon. If it is really so, it is the most whimsical piece of civility I ever heard of. He informs us, that his intention is for North Carolina, where he expects five regiments from England; that he only brought two regiments of light infantry from Boston. This is certainly a droll way of proceeding. To communicate his full plan to the enemy is too novel to be credited.

'The Congress committee, a certain number of the Committee of Safety, and your humble servant, have had two conferences. The result will agreeably surprise you. It is, in the first place, agreed, and justly, that to fortify the town against shipping is impracticable; but we are to fortify lodgements, in some commanding part of the city, for two thousand men. We are to erect enclosed batteries on both sides of the water near Hell Gate, which will answer the double purpose of securing the town against piracies through the Sound, and secure our communication with Long Island, now become a more capital point than ever, as it is determined to form a strong fortified camp of three thousand men in that Island, immediately opposite to New York. The pass in the Highlands is to be made as respectable as possible, and guarded by a battalion. In short, I think the plan judicious and complete. The two brass pieces, and other articles, will be sent down as you request. You have heard of the fate of the cannon near Kingsbridge.'

After his arrival in New York, General Lee lost no time in entering upon measures to put the city in a state of defence, both by a suitable arrangement of the troops, and by selecting positions for fortified posts. The committee of the Continental Congress retuned to Philadelphia, but he had frequent conferences with persons, delegated from the New York Congress, who manifested less reluctance than formerly at the idea of assuming a defensive attitude, especially as the arrival of Clinton on an uncertain expedition made it more likely that an attack from the enemy was to be apprehended. Considering the differ-

ent temperaments of the General, and the members of the Congerss, they went on together with as much harmony as could be expected. They agreed, and acted in unison, on all essential points, or at least so far, that he was able to execute his plans, without any embarrassing opposition. They were totally at variance, however, as to one subject, and that was the supplying of the ships in the harbor with provisions, which the Congress persisted in doing, and with which the General forbore to interfere, since it did not obstruct nor retard his schemes for defensive preparations.

'The Governor, and the captain of the man-of-war,' said he, in a letter to General Washington, 'had threatened perdition to the town, if the cannon were removed from the batteries and wharves, but I ever considered their threats as idle menaces, and even persuaded the town to be of the same way of thinking. We accordingly conveyed them to a place of safety, in the middle of the day, and no cannonade ensued.* Captain Parker publishes a pleasant reason for his past conduct. He says, that it was manifestly my intention, and that of the New England men under my command, to bring down destruction on this town, so hated for their loyal principles, but that he was determined not to indulge us, and so remained quiet out of spite. The people here laugh at his nonsense, and begin to despise the menaces, which formerly used to throw them into convulsions. To do them justice, the whole show a wonderful alacrity, and in removing the cannon, men and boys of all ages worked with the greatest zeal and pleasure. I really believe that the generality are as well affected as any on the continent.

---

*This was done without the consent, or previous knowledge of the Committee of Safety, who, although they did not interpose to prevent the act, were not well pleased with it, both because they looked upon it as an assumption of authority by the General, and because it renewed their apprehensions of the burning of the town. It had the good effect to elicit from them an order, to have the *public records of the colony* removed from the city, to a place of greater safety.

'The Provincial Congress have ordered in fifteen hundred minute men. A number, equal to two battalions, is coming from Pennsylvania and the Jerseys. Lord Stirling's regiment is already here, but not complete. When the major part, or a sufficient number arrive, we shall begin our works. My intention is to pull down that part of the fort on the town side, to prevent its being converted into a citadel for the enemy, and to erect a battery on a traverse in the street, to prevent a lodgement in it. A redoubt and battery, at the pass of Hell Gate, will prevent their ships and tenders passing and repassing to and from the Sound.

'We have fixed on a spot in Long Island for a retrenched camp, which I hope will render it impossible for them to get footing on that important Island. As this camp can always be reinforced, it is our intention to make it so capacious as to contain four thousand men. The batteries on the pass of Hudson's River will be secured, as soon as possible. Some of the heavy cannon from hence must be sent up for the purpose. It is really a fine train we are in possession of. You shall have a return of the guns, as well as stores, by the post. Captain Smith is an excellent, intelligent, active officer, and I take the liberty of recommending him to your protection. Captain Badlam, of the artillery, is likewise a man of great merit in his way.

'You must pardon me, dear General, for a liberty I have taken. You know that Sears was to collect our volunteers in Connecticut, but he thought he could not succeed, unless he had some nominal office and rank. I accordingly most imprudently, by the virtue of the power deputed by you to me, (which power you never deputed) appointed him *Adjutant General*, with the rank of Lieutenant, for the expedition. It can have no bad consequences; the man was much tickled, and it added spurs to his *hat*. He is a creature of much spirit and public virtue.'*

---

*General Lee seems to have had but little reverence for *titles*, which he said were well enough 'to gratify the adulterated pride of

Again General Lee writes to Washington, on the 29th of February.

'The Congress have as yet not taken the least step for the security of this place. The instant I leave it, I conclude the Provincial Congress, and inhabitants in general, will relapse into their former hysterics. The men-of-war, and Mr Tryon, will return to their old stations at the wharves, and the first regiments, which arrive from England, will take quiet possession of the town and Long Island. I have written letters, till I am tired, on the subject to the Congress, but have received no answer. The committee of three, who were here to confer with me, agreed it was necessary that five thousand men should be in the place. They left us, and no notice has been taken of the affair since. Great and extensive works were resolved upon, and we have scarcely sufficient numbers to mark out the ground,

---

the *Magnifici* in pompous aristocracies; but, in a great, free, manly, equal commonwealth, it is quite abominable.' The following is an extract of a letter from him to Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia.

'For my own part, I would as lief they would put ratsbane in my mouth, as the *Excellency*, with which I am daily crammed. How much more true dignity was there in the simplicity of address among the Romans! Marcus Tullius Cicero, Decimo Bruto Imperatori, or Caio Marcello Consuli, than to "His Excellency Major General Noodle," or to the "Honorable John Doodle." My objections are perhaps trivial and whimsical; but, for my soul, I cannot help starting them. If, therefore, I should sometimes address a letter to you, without the *Excellency* tacked, you must not esteem it a mark of personal or official disrespect, but the reverse.' *See Memoirs of Charles Lee*, p. 323.

Although there was no fixed code, established by any formal convention, for graduating those badges of distinction during the Revolution, yet custom and common consent gave currency to a sort of rule, which was generally followed. The President of Congress, Ministers and public Agents abroad, Presidents of Conventions, Governors of States, the Commander in Chief, and Major Generals on separate commands, were honored with the prefix of *Excellency;* whereas, members of Congress, and other public bodies, and Brigadier Generals in the army, must forsooth be contented with *Honorable*. But they were all enti-

much less to throw up the works. In short, I know not what to make of this apathy on so important a subject.

'I shall now give you a detail of what we have been doing, and in what circumstances we are. Our force, including the minute men, amounts to about seventeen hundred men. Ward's regiment, which is the strongest, I have stationed on Long Island. They are employed in making fascines, and preparing other materials for constructing three redoubts, one of which will in a great measure, in correspondence with a battery, which I have sunk opposite to it in the city, secure the entrance of the East River. Waterberry's and Stirling's regiments are quartered in the city; the former in the upper barracks, the latter in the lower. Two hundred minute men are likewise lodged in the town. Drake's regiment of minute men, and one more company, (in all about two hundred,) are stationed at Horn's Hook, which commands the pass of Hell Gate. They are employed in throwing up a redoubt, to contain three hundred men.

---

tled to another appendage, the ancient and knightly epithet of *Esquire*, which, like the tail of a kite, was never to be omitted, whatever else might go before. Thus we have, *His Excellency John Hancock Esquire; His Excellency Benjamin Franklin Esquire; His Excellency Jonathan Trumbull Esquire*; but when we come to plain members of Congress, it is no more than *The Honorable Roger Sherman Esquire*, and for a brigadier general, *The Honorable Richard Montgomery Esquire*.

Commonly, also, a Major General, when he was not on a separate command, had no higher title than *Honorable*. In such case, the final epithet was usually omitted, and the military one inserted, as *The Honorable Major General Lee*. It was only the unskilled that wrote, *The Honorable Major General Lee Esquire*, yet it would not be easy to tell, why Sancho's title should be eliminated in this case, more than in the other.

In writing letters, the uninitiated sometimes made ludicrous mistakes, and interlarded, *Worship*, *Worshipful*, and the like, out of all time and measure, and were guilty of strange transpositions and misplacings of the recognized titles. Letters to Washington frequently began, '*Illustrious Sir*;' and petitions were prefaced with a string of lofty and sonorous epithets.

'As to the town, having few hands, and the necessary duty being hard, I have been able to effect little. I have, indeed, thrown down the side of the fort next the town, to prevent its being converted into a citadel for the use of the enemy. It was absolutely impossible to be moulded into anything, which could annoy their ships. I have likewise thrown a traverse, or barrier, across the Broad Way, two hundred yards in the rear of the fort, with four pieces of cannon, to prevent the enemy lodging themselves in the remains of the fort, and repairing it. It is likewise my intention to barricade all the streets leading into the Broad Way, both on the right and left, to secure us against being taken in reverse. Batteries are to be erected on the eminence behind Trinity Church, to keep their ships at so great a distance, as not to injure the town. As we are surrounded by navigable waters, I consider enclosed works as rather dangerous. It was, therefore, my intention to throw up a large number of large *fleches*, or *redans*, at certain distances, one behind another, so as to render it a disputable field of battle against any force. Kingsbridge being a most important pass, without the command of which we could have no communication with Connecticut, I had resolved to make it as strong as possible.

'Such were my schemes, but as the Congress have not furnished the force, which I was taught to expect from Philadelphia, we have not had it in our power to effect more than I have related. Governor Tryon, and the Asia, still continue betwixt Staten and Bedlow's Islands. It has pleased his Excellency, in violation of the compact he had made, to seize several vessels from Jersey, laden with flour. It has, in return, pleased *my excellency* to stop all provisions from the city, and cut off all intercourse with him; a measure, which has thrown the mayor, council, and tories into agonies. The propensity, or rather rage, for paying court to this great man, is inconceivable. They cannot be weaned from him.'

From the tenor of General Lee's letters, it is obvious, that his energy and warmth outstripped the cautious prudence of

the Provincial Congress. He conformed himself to their movements, with exemplary self command, for a time, but when the conviction was forced upon him, that they would do nothing, it was hard for him, with the spirit of a soldier, to tread the line of demarkation, and not be tempted to overstep the prescribed bounds of his authority. This was particularly the case in seizing tories, a duty which was committed by the Continental Congress to the *civil authority* of each colony, and pertained in no manner to the continental military service. Of this fact General Lee became convinced, but not till he had exercised the power in some instances. And yet he was borne out by the advice, if not by the orders, of Washington, who, on the subject of disarming the tories, said, 'you can seize upon the persons of the principals; they must be so notoriously known, that there will be little danger of your committing mistakes.' General Lee acted strictly within this advice. In fact, the resolutions of Congress on this head are somewhat ambiguous.* They recommend to the Colonial Assemblies to disarm and seize the more dangerous tories, and authorize them to call to their aid, in effecting this object, the continental troops stationed in or near any colony, where this service was to be done, but there is no clause requiring the continental officers to abstain from the same acts. The nature of the case, therefore, would lead a commander of continental troops to infer, that, when he knew a flagrant offender, it was his duty to apprehend him, without waiting for an order from the provincial authority. It was the intent of the resolutions, however, to give this power wholly to the respective colonies, and justly enough, since it was extended over all the citizens, any one of whom was subject to be taken up on suspicion, tried, and imprisoned. The most that a continental officer could with propriety do, in such a case, was to secure a suspected person, and deliver him over to the civil jurisdiction of the colony.

* See Journals of the Old Congress, for March 2d, 1776.

On the 6th of March, a committee of the New York Congress waited on General Lee, with a list of regulations for supplying the armed ships with provisions, which they wished him to examine and approve. They reported, 'that General Lee was pleased to give for answer, that he was to resign the command here to Lord Stirling to night, but that if he were to continue, he would not consent to supply them with any provisions, as they were at open war with us; that he hoped Lord Stirling would be of the same opinion; that his instructions from the Continental Congress were, to use every means in his power for the defence of the city.' This was the last public intercourse between General Lee and the Congress. The regulations were approved by Lord Stirling, and no change in regard to the ships occurred.

Lord Stirling continued in command at New York, till General Washington's arrival, at the head of the American army from Boston, which was about the first of April. Satisfied that more efficient measures were necessary, and resolved to carry them into effect, he wrote in strong terms to the Congress, and at last induced them to embrace his views, and follow his counsels.

CHAPTER VI.

PROCEEDINGS FOR ORGANIZING A NEW GOVERNMENT IN NEW YORK.—MR MORRIS'S VIEWS OF THE SUBJECT.—MR JAY'S RESOLUTIONS.—MR MORRIS'S SPEECH IN FAVOR OF INDEPENDENCE.—HIS MISSION TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.—DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ADOPTED IN NEW YORK.—COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO DRAFT A CONSTITUTION.

In the month of April a new election took place for another Congress, and a quorum was formed on the 8th of May.

The last Congress, as mentioned above, was elected only for six months; the present was for a year. The powers and instructions of the two were the same. It may be worthy of remark, that several of the delegates to the Continental Congress were likewise members of this Congress, as Jay, Philip Livingston, Duane, Alsop. It moreover appears, that the Provincial Assembly had paramount claims on their attendance, for when Mr Livingston returned to the Continental Congress, on the 26th of June, he asked a formal permission of the House, which was granted, on the ground that it was necessary to make up a sufficient number of New York delegates, to form the quorum of that colony in the Continental Congress. Hence his name was affixed to the Declaration of Independence, but not those of the others, who were detained in the Provincial Congress. Alsop likewise returned, but, as we shall see hereafter, he had other reasons for not signing the declaration.

Gouverneur Morris was a member of this new Congress, but whether of the last short one I am not certain, for I do not find his name on the journals during that space. If he was chosen, he probably did not attend, but he now comes forward, prepared to take a prominent lead in all the great measures for freedom and active defence.*

In addition to military preparations, and schemes for defeating the machinations and securing the persons of tories, which had thus far been the chief business of the Provincial Assemblies of New York, this Congress had in prospect two of the

---

*Shortly after the death of Montgomery, and the disastrous occurrences at Quebec, a number of gentlemen in New York formed a plan for raising a battalion of fifteen hundred men for nine months, and made the proposition to the Provincial Congress, exacting as a condition, that they should be allowed to appoint their own officers. The proposal was refused on these terms, the Congress insisting that all officers should be appointed by that body. To this, the gentlemen, who set the project on foot, would not agree, and it was abandoned. Gouverneur Morris was to have been a Lieutenant Colonel of these forces.

most important subjects that could come under the cognizance of any deliberative body,—the assuming of independence, and the formation of a new plan of government. The Continental Congress resolved, on the 15th of May, that it should be recommended to the assemblies and conventions of the colonies, in which no regular government had been established, to adopt such forms as should best suit their condition, and lead to the happiness of their constituents. This was virtually a recommendation to declare independence; for there can be no higher act of sovereignty or self control in a people, than to set up for themselves a new and separate scheme of government. When the subject came before the New York Congress, a week afterwards, it was evidently regarded in this light, and the debates took a turn corresponding with the same view.

Up to this period, very few persons in New York had thought seriously of independence. We have seen the Congress, a year ago, endeavoring to patch up a plan of reconciliation, and since that time extremely tender in taking any steps, which should implicate them in the charge of obstinate disloyalty to the King of Great Britain.* In this respect, nearly all the other colonies, nay doubtless every other one, were in advance of New York. It is not easy to trace the growth of the spirit of independence from its first germination, through its gradual progress, and to decide when and where it came earliest to maturity, and took the strongest hold on the public mind. When the war began, it is probable that circumstances, emanating from the oppressive measures of the British

*In regard to those, who at this time espoused the doctrine of reconciliation, the author of 'Common Sense' said, probably with equal justice and discrimination, that they consisted of the following description of persons, viz. 'Interested men, who are not to be trusted; weak men, who *cannot* see; prejudiced men, who *will not* see; and a certain set of moderate men, who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent, than all the other three.'

government, had raised this spirit to a higher tone in Massachusetts, than any where else, but the electric chain of sympathy soon conducted it to all the members of the general body, which were assimilated by common interests, and exposed to common dangers, encroachment, and suffering.* Recently, however, much had been said and written on the subject. The popular voice was becoming audible in various quarters, and after the wide circulation and unparallelled success of the tract entitled *Common Sense*, in the winter and spring of 1776, the public mind rapidly converged to a point favorable alike to unanimity of sentiments and concerted action.

At this crisis the third New York Congress assembled, and, among their earliest proceedings, was the consideration of the resolution of the Continental Congress, recommending the organization of a new form of government. Gouverneur Morris put himself at the head of the debates on this question, and opened the business by a long argument in support of the measure, showing by a series of facts and reasonings, that it was necessary, and that the proper time had arrived. This argument embraced a wide compass, sketching a historical outline

---

* In like manner, it would be difficult to tell, who, among the eminent individuals of the time, were the first to defend openly a separation and absolute independence of the American colonies. Franklin claims the distinction of being among the earliest and most conspicuous. Mr Quincy, while with him in England, speaks of him in the following manner, as early as November, 1774, in writing to a friend. '*Dr Franklin is an American in heart and soul. His ideas are not contracted within the narrow limits of exemption from taxes, but are extended upon the broad scale of* TOTAL EMANCIPATION. *He is explicit and bold upon the subject.*' Again, he 'explicitly and in so many words said, that *New England only* could hold out for ages against this country, and, if they were firm and united, in *seven years* would conquer them.' *See Memoir of Josiah Quincy, Jr. pp.* 250, 341.

This is the more remarkable, as Dr Franklin had then lived several years in England, and of course out of the sphere of sympathy and excitement, which, by reaction and attrition, had warmed the feelings and elevated the sentiments of his countrymen at home.

of the differences between England and the colonies, the gradual encroachments of the former, and the injuries and oppressions to which the latter had submitted, till their patience was exhausted, and submission had become an outrage upon their dignity as a free people, a crime against justice, and a mockery of liberty. In short, we hear no more of reconciliation.

It was Mr Morris's opinion, however, that the present Congress had not power to enter upon the plan of a new government, as such a thing was not contemplated by their constituents, when they were chosen. At the close of his speech he made a motion, that a committee should be appointed to draw up a notice to the people, recommending a new election of persons, expressly authorized to assemble and form a new government. This motion was opposed by Mr Scott, on the ground that it was doubtful whether the Congress had not the power desired, and he thought it was enough to appoint a committee to report as to that point. These preliminary difficulties were at length got over, by an amendment of Mr Morris's motion, proposed by Mr Sands, that a committee should be appointed to take into consideration the resolutions of the Continental Congress, and to report thereon with all convenient speed. Mr Morris held to hisoriginal proposition, and opposed the amendment in a speech, but it was carried in the affirmative.

On the twenty-seventh of May the committee reported in substance as follows. That the right of framing or new modelling civil government belongs to the people ; that the present form of Congress and committees originated in the free choice of the inhabitants, and depends on them ; that this form was instituted while the old government subsisted, and was necessarily defective ; that, by the voluntary abdication of the late Governor Tryon, the dissolution of the old Assembly, and the unwarrantable hostilities committed by the British fleets and armies, the old form of government is *ipso facto* dissolved, whereby it is become necessary, that the people of this colony should institute a new and regular form of internal government, in ex-

clusion of foreign and external power; that doubts have arisen as to the authority of this Congress to form such a government, which doubts can of right be removed by the people only; that the Congress ought to continue in the exercise of such powers, as are clearly delegated to them, and in the mean time give the people an opportunity to remove the above doubts, either by declaring their respective representatives in Congress to be invested with the necessary powers for establishing a new government, or else to elect another body for the purpose; and that an order should be issued, by the Congress, to the committees of the several counties, for calling the people together to express their sentiments on the subject, by the usual mode of elections.

This report, by taking a middle ground between the principles of the two motions, and compassing the objects of both, was approved and accepted.

But before there was time to gain the sense of the people on this affair, a new topic of discussion came before the House. By a letter, dated June 8th, the New York representatives in the Continental Congress wrote as follows to the Provincial Congress.

'Your delegates have expected, that the question of independence will very shortly be agitated in Congress. Some of us consider ourselves as bound by our instructions not to vote on that question, and all wish to have your sentiments thereon. The matter will admit no delay. We have, therefore, sent an express, who will wait your orders.'

This letter, the journals state, was read with *closed doors*. A letter from the President of the Virginia Convention had, also, been very recently received, enclosing the resolves of that body, on the 22d of May, instructing the Virginia delegates in the Continental Congress to bring forward and sustain a proposition for independence. The New York delegates were still acting under their original instructions, which had not been changed, and which empowered them only to consent and determine on such measures, as should be 'effectual for

the re-establishment and preservation of American rights and privileges,' and the 'restoration of harmony' between Great Britain and the colonies. With such powers, it was clear they could take no efficient part in the deliberations for independence. Hence their letter demanding further advice.

The subject was now brought fairly before the House, and in a manner that made it necessary for them to act. At this juncture, Mr Jay presented a resolution, which was unanimously agreed to, and which paved the way to the happy results that followed. The purport of it was, that, as the people of the colony had not authorized their representatives to declare the colony independent of Great Britain, and yet, as recent events required some determination on this, as well as many other important points, it was necessary for the powers of the representatives to be enlarged, and it was therefore resolved, that it should be earnestly recommended to the freeholders and other electors, not only to invest the deputies with the authority heretofore required, for instituting a new form of government, but also 'with full power to deliberate and determine on every question whatever, that may concern or effect the interest of this colony, and to conclude upon, ordain, and execute every act and measure, which to them shall appear conducive to the happiness, security, and welfare of this colony, and that they hold and exercise the said powers, until the second Tuesday in May next, or until a regular form of government shall be established,'—and, moreover, 'to instruct or otherwise to inform the said deputies of their sentiments, relative to the great question of independency, and such other points as they may think proper.' The latitude and comprehensiveness of this resolve were calculated, as soon as it should come in a proper manner before the people, to put an end to all further doubts, as to the objects and extent of powers in the Congress.

There are still existing the fragments of a speech, made by Mr Morris, in the course of the debates on the proposition for adopting a new plan of government, which he wrote out after

it was delivered. Its precise date I am unable to determine. The first half is missing, but a few extracts from the remainder will give some idea of his opinions, on the subjects discussed, as well as of his manner of writing at that time. He was now twenty-four years old.

In the exordium, and first half of his speech, the orator seems to have delineated to his audience the origin of the political difficulties, which the nation then labored under, and to have come to the conclusion, that old forms and old connexions were inevitably dissolved, and could no longer subsist; that the years of childhood and vassalage were passed; and that the time had come, when America was imperiously called on to assume the claims, and maintain the dignity, of manhood and self confidence. In despatching these preliminaries, he touches on the hackneyed theme of *reconciliation*, the phantom, which had so long played its illusions in the fancy of his associates in the New York Congress.

'Undoubtedly, Sir,' said he, 'you will find some state carpenter, ready to frame this disjointed government, and warrant his work. And if there should be some flaws, considering the *protection* you receive from Britain, you ought to put up with them. I know he will tell you so. *Protection*, Sir, is a very good thing, yet a man may pay too much for diamonds. There is a common story of a certain juggler, who would undertake to cut off a man's head, and clap it on again so neatly, as to cure him without a scar. Much such a sort of juggling business is this protection we are to receive. Great Britain will not fail to bring us into a war with some of her neighbors, and then protect us as a lawyer defends a suit; the client paying for it. This is quite in form, but a wise man would rather, I think, get rid of the suit and the lawyer together. Again, how are we to be protected? If a descent is made upon our coasts, and the British navy and army are three thousand miles off, we cannot receive very great benefit from them on that occasion. If, to obviate this inconvenience, we have an army and navy constantly among us, who can say

that we shall not need a little protection against them? We may indeed put a clause in the agreement, that Britain shall not use them to enslave us; and then all will be safe, for we cannot suppose they will *break their promise.*

'Thus I find, Sir, that with the help of a little paper and ink, we may draw out a long treaty, filled with cautious items, and wise *et ceteras.* Then the whole affair is settled. America is quite independent of Great Britain, *except* that they have the same King; for although the British Parliament is allowed to possess, under the name of supremacy, an immense train of legislative powers, there are contained in the agreement strict inhibitions from using any one of them. Thus it is settled, I say, for seven years. Not a day further. The very next Parliament, not being bound by the acts of the former, the whole is in law as to them a nullity. Our acknowledgment of supremacy binds us as subjects, and our most exquisite restrictions, being contrary to the very nature of civil society, are merely void. Remember, too, that no faith is to be kept with rebels.

'In this case, or in any other case, if we fancy ourselves hardly dealt with, I maintain there is no redress but by arms. For it never yet was known, that, when men assume power, they will part with it again unless by compulsion. Now the bond of continental union once broken, a vast load of debt accumulated, many lives lost, and nothing got, I wonder whether the people of this country would again choose to put themselves into the hands of a Congress, even if a general attack were made upon their liberties. But undoubtedly the whole continent would not run to arms immediately, upon an attempt against one of the colonies, and thus, one after another, we should infallibly be subjugated to that power, which we know would destroy even the shadow of liberty among us.' *

---

* The idea of a combined union of movement in the colonies, and of its necessity in accomplishing a desired end, is beautifully expressed

Having thus closed the first part of his discourse, he proceeded to the subject of *independence*, showing first what it is, and next, that in all its essential characteristics it then existed in reality, though not in name, even in the colony of New York.

'These, and ten thousand other reasons, Sir, all serve to convince me, that, to make a solid and lasting peace, with liberty and security, is utterly impracticable. My argument, therefore, stands thus. As a connexion with Great Britain cannot again exist, without enslaving America, *an independence is absolutely necessary*. I cannot balance between the two. We run a hazard in one path, I confess, but then we are infallibly ruined if we pursue the other.

'Let us, however, act fairly. Let us candidly examine this Independence. Let us look back, for much of the journey is past; and forward, for much is yet to come. Many objects are hideous, only from the distance at which they are viewed. Strict scrutiny may sometimes give us the demonstration of sense, that things frightful at the first appearance, are nevertheless of great utility. It is the perfection of man to be guided by reason. And above all men, those, who are entrusted with public concerns, should as much as possible divest themselves of every prejudice and passion. Without passion or prejudice, therefore, let us coolly go round this subject and examine it on every side.

---

by John Dickinson, in a letter to Josiah Quincy, dated June 20th, 1774. 'Doubt not that everything bears a most favorable aspect. Nothing can throw us into a pernicious confusion, but one colony's breaking the line of opposition, by advancing too hastily before the rest. The one which dares to betray the common cause by rushing forward, contrary to the maxims of discipline established by common sense, and the experience of ages, will inevitably and utterly perish.'—*Memoir of Josiah Quincy, Jr. p.* 169. It is possible this was meant as a gentle hint to Mr Quincy, and his friends in Massachusetts, who, if they had not broken the line, were at least in the van of the column, and pressing forward with an eagerness not exactly relished, by many of their more prudent compatriots at that time.

'Here it will be necessary to determine in what it consists, which will naturally open our attention to what further steps are necessary to the completion of it. Sir, I believe no such thing as perfect independence ever yet existed in any State. The wants and weaknesses of cities, kingdoms, and empires, like the wants and weaknesses of the miserable people who inhabit them, form mutual connexions, relations, and dependencies, necessarily adapted to various purposes. Independence then, applied to communities, can mean nothing more than the powers which separate societies exercise among themselves. These relate to the society, compared either with its component parts, or with other societies. As to the first, it comprehends legislation, and distributive justice. The second consists in coining money, raising armies, regulating commerce, peace, war, and treaties. These, Sir, I take to be the grand lineaments and characteristics, which mark out independence. Go farther, and you will degenerate into quibbling logicians. To them and dictionary makers let us leave all nicer distinctions; and see how far America may, or may not, be termed an independent State.

'First, as to legislation. I do candidly confess, that I meet with no laws, which you have passed in the usual style of *be it enacted;* but your cogent *recommendations*, with the penalties of disobedience affixed, are far from unfrequent. Secondly, as to distributive justice. At the first view, indeed, it seems not to have been your object, because writs run and judges sit as they were wont to do, and the King of England is (by fiction of law) present at every court on the continent. Sir, when this system was first organized, we found a very good code of civil laws in being. The wisdom of ages has been collected for their perfection, and we must have been losers by a change. But if you should think proper to shut up the shop of justice, not wantonly, but from evident necessity, will any man pretend to deny, that the law would from that single breath become a dead letter? And if any other government should take a step of this kind, without evident necessity, the subjects

of that government would revolt at least as readily, as the inhabitants of this country. We do not find, that there was any immediate and personal act of the prince necessary for the exercise of the law, unless perhaps the affixing a piece of wax now and then to a piece of paper or parchment. And I believe we may find men in this country, quite as well skilled in that manufacture, as any English workmen. If not, I am confident we may import as many workmen as we please. But, Sir, what says the law to the present resistance? We have lawyers enough among us, to tell what the law books say. Many hard names are there stored up for such occasions, of which I believe the very gentlest and smoothest kind are *riotously* and *routously*. Yet from the general silence of judges and juries, I cannot but think that the people consider this House as the *sovereign power*, a resistance of whose commands is that resistance, which all these hard words are levelled at. Let us consider the matter a little further. Pray, if we had found the people of this country without any law whatever, or (what amounts to the same thing,) if his Majesty should send a frigate to bring over his governors, counsellors, judges, great seal, and the like, in such case should we hesitate a moment to provide proper laws and proper tribunals? Did we, in such instances as the law was deficient in, did we there hesitate? Or rather, have we not a strict tribunal for the laws of Congress in every committee? To affirm then, that the distribution of justice is not in the hands of this House, argues great want of attention, and ignorance of our public proceedings. To make short of this part of my argument, I take Massachusetts Bay as an instance in point, which renders further reasoning unnecessary.

'We find, therefore, the characteristic marks and insignia of independence in this society, considered in itself, and compared with other societies. The enumeration is conviction. Coining money, raising armies, regulating commerce, peace, war, all these things you are not only adepts in, but masters of. Treaties alone remain, and even those you have dabbled at.

Georgia you put under the ban of the empire, and received her upon repentance as a member of the flock. Canada you are now treating with France and Spain you ought to treat with, and the rest is but a name. I believe, Sir, the Romans were as much governed, or rather oppressed, by their emperors, as ever any people were by their king. But *emperor* was more agreeable to their ears, than *king*. Some, nay many persons in America, dislike the word *independence*. For my own part, I see no reason why *Congress* is not full as good a word as *States-General*, or *Parliament*, and it is a mighty easy matter to please people, when a single sound will effect it.

'From these remarks on the nature of Independence, and on the fact that it already exists in everything but in name, the speaker turns to a consideration of the advantages of a separation from England, or of sliding into what he calls the 'unavoidable situation' of an independent government. These advantages he ranks under three heads, *peace*, *liberty*, *security*.

'Whether a State shall enjoy *peace* or suffer war, depends upon two great leading circumstances; the probability of attack, and the means of defence. As to the probability of attack, we must consider by whom it is to be made, in what manner, and for what purpose. It is quite a hackneyed topic, boldly insisted on, though very lightly assumed, that the instant an American independence is declared, we shall have all the powers of Europe on our backs, as by a general consent, to share out this country amongst them.

'Experience, Sir, has taught those powers, and will teach them more clearly every day, that an American war is tedious, expensive, uncertain, and ruinous. Three thousand miles of a boisterous ocean are to be passed over, and the vengeful tempests, which whirl along our coasts, are daily to be encountered in such expeditions. At least three months' expense must be incurred, before one gun can be fired against an American village; and three months more, before each shattered armament can find an asylum for repose. A hardy, brave peo-

ple, or else a destructive climate, must be subdued, while the troops, exhausted by fatigue, find at every step that desertion and happiness are synonymous terms. Grant, that with a wasteful dissipation of blood and treasure, some little portion of this vast country may be conquered. Fortresses remain to be built, magazines provided, and garrisons established, for the defence of a broad desolation, not worth one shilling to the possessors. Or should it better please a maritime power, (and we have none but these to fear) should it please them to carry on a naval war, pray where is the American property, which will pay the expenses of a European armament?

'Nations do not make war without some view. Should they be able to conquer America, it would cost them more to maintain such conquest, than the fee simple of the country is worth. They could gain nothing but our commerce, and that they may have without striking a blow. Thus, Sir, it appears to my poor discernment an incontrovertible truth, that no nation whatever would incline to attack us. For after all, this consideration must arise amongst them, that the surest consequence of the most splendid votaries would be a bloody war with each other about sharing the spoils.

'But I cannot think it will ever come to this. For when I turn my eyes to the means of defence, I find them amply sufficient. We have all heard, that in the last war America was conquered in Germany. I hold the converse of this proposition to be true, namely, that in, and by America, his Majesty's German dominions were secured. The last, and every other war for more than a century, have been determined more by the wealth, than the arms of contending nations: and the great source of that wealth is in the western world. It rises here, flourishes in Europe, and is buried in India. The situation of this continent formerly did, and still does enable us in a very great degree to check that flood of property, which thus glides along to the eastward. The rapacity of adventurers will greedily seize the opportunity of becoming rich, by pressing upon the merchandize of other people. And large

convoys for merchant ships are equally expensive and inefficacious. I appeal to experience. As to the project of shutting up all the creeks and harbors along this extensive coast, this is calculated only for the meridian of St James's, and becomes daily an object of ridicule, even to our women and children. I know the objection, that as we ourselves are a trading people, we may suffer equal loss with our foes. Although I cannot admit this in its fullest latitude, yet it has some weight. But it leads to a very obvious consequence, that is to say, an American navy. Gentlemen may either start or smile at this idea, as it chances to raise their contempt or admiration. Let us consider it. Would a fleet consisting of ten sixty, ten fifty, and ten forty gun ships, with ten sloops of twenty, and thirty of ten guns, would such a fleet, Sir, make a respectable figure in the defence of our coasts? Some persons will say, yes, but where are you to get them? Why, Sir, the materials are amongst us, and five millions dollars will fit them all out for a six months' voyage. I shall be told, that is very pretty scheming, and asked perhaps how the expense of this fleet is to be maintained. I would not lay heavy imposts upon trade. I am sure five per cent, upon all commodities imported into this continent, would be a very trivial tax, and there certainly are not less than twenty millions of dollars in value, annually imported. This would yield one million, and that is sufficient to keep your navy afloat. And with such a navy it would be still more inconvenient to attack this country. See what effects have followed from fitting out a few little insignificant vessels, under the name of privateers. The last mode of defence consists in having a respectable army. I do not mean an armed banditti, to become our masters. The *officers* of your standing army should be regularly paid, and the profession by that means cultivated. But the soldiers should never be enlisted, except when actual service required it; and, lest we should then be at a loss for good ones, it should be provided by wholesome militia laws, that every man in the country should know the duties of a soldier.

'Thus, Sir, by means of that great gulph which rolls its waves between Europe and America, by the situation of these colonies, always adapted to hinder or interrupt all communication between the two, by the productions of our soil, which the Almighty has filled with every necessary to make us a great maritime people, by the extent of our coasts and those immense rivers, which serve at once to open a communication with our interior country, and teach us the arts of navigation, by those vast fisheries, which, affording an inexhaustible mine of wealth and a cradle of industry, breed hardy mariners, inured to danger and fatigue, finally by the unconquerable spirit of freemen, deeply interested in the preservation of a government, which secures to them the blessings of liberty, and exalts the dignity of mankind; by all these, I expect a full and lasting defence against any and every part of the earth; while the great advantages to be derived from a friendly intercourse with this country almost render the means of defence unnecessary, from the great improbability of being attacked. So far peace seems to smile upon our future independence. But that this fair goddess will equally crown our union with Great Britain, my fondest hopes cannot lead me even to suppose. Every war, in which she is engaged, must necessarily involve us in its detestable consequences; whilst weak and unarmed, we have no shield of defence, unless such as she may please (for her own sake) to afford, or else the pity of her enemies, and the insignificance of slaves, beneath the attention of a generous foe.

'Let us next turn our attention to a question of infinitely greater importance, namely, the *liberty* of this country. I speak here only of political liberty, and this may, I believe, be secured by the simplest contrivance imaginable. If America is divided into small districts, and the election of members into Congress annual, and every member incapacitated from serving more than one year out of three, I cannot conceive the least temptation to an abuse of power, in the legislative and executive parts of government. And as long as those foun-

tains are pure, the streams of justice will flow clear and wholesome. But shall we pretend to say, that we have political liberty, while subject to the legislative control of Great Britain? Even freed from that, will not the silent efforts of influence undermine any constitution we can possibly devise? And of what importance is it to the subject, whether a love of power or a love of money, whether avarice or ambition, are the causes of his unhappiness? If I were to choose a master, it should be a single tyrant, because I had infinitely rather be torn by a lion, than eaten by vermin.

'The last consideration, Sir, is *security*, and so long as the system of laws by which we are now governed shall prevail, it is amply provided for in every separate colony. There may indeed arise an objection, because some gentlemen suppose, that the different colonies will carry on a sort of land piracy against each other. But how this can possibly happen, when the idea of separate colonies no longer exists, I cannot for my soul comprehend. That something very like this has already been done, I shall not deny, but the reason is as evident as the fact. We never yet had a government in this country, of sufficient energy to restrain the lawless and indigent. Whenever a form of government is established, which deserves the name, these insurrections must cease. But who is the man so hardy as to affirm, that they will not grow with our growth, while on every occasion we must resort to an English judicature to terminate differences, which the maxims of policy will teach them to leave undetermined? By degrees we are getting beyond the utmost pale of English government. Settlements are forming to the westward of us, whose inhabitants acknowledge no authority but their own, and of consequence no umpire but the sword. The King of England will make no new grants, the settlers will ask none. We occupy but a small strip of land along the sea coasts, and in less than fifty years those western settlements will endeavor to carve out for themselves a passage to the ocean. Are we then to build a huge wall against them? Are we to solicit

assistance from Britain? Vain thought! Britain, already sinking under a vast load of debt, and hastening to ruin by the loss of freedom, without which even the interest of that debt cannot be paid, Britain will have enemies enough of her own. If we seize the present opportunity, we shall have no such causes of apprehension. Those settlements, sensible of their present weakness and our power, will all be made under the authority of that body, which is the legislature of the continent. They will constantly look up to it for laws and protection.'

He hints at several other advantages of independence, besides the three broad and extensive ones already enumeraed, particularly a flourishing commerce, augmentation of wealth, increase of population, and diffusion of knowledge, which would 'cause all nations to resort hither as an asylum from oppression;' and adds,

'Nothing more remains but to say a word on the *inconveniences*, to which an independent form of government would subject us. And what are they? A war with Great Britain. And in that very war are we already engaged. Perhaps some gentlemen may be apprehensive of losing a little consequence, and importance, by living in a country where all are on an equal footing. Virtue in such a country will always be esteemed, and that alone should be respected in any country. If these gentlemen would reflect, that free republican states are always most thickly inhabited, perhaps they may be of opinion with me, that the indulgence of a few in luxurious ease, to the prejudice of their fellow creatures, is at best not laudable; but when it tends to thin the ranks of mankind, and to encourage a general profligacy of manners, it is then criminal in the highest degree.

'I do not scruple to affirm, that all dangers to be apprehended from an independency, may well be obviated by this Assembly. If we so regulate our own power, as to give perfect freedom in our Constitution, there is but little danger of intestine broils. For mankind, however chargeable with levi-

ty on other accounts, are by no means prone to change their form of government, so long as it is merely tolerable. And this leads me, Sir, to consider the last objection to independence, which I shall take on me to mention. It is, the *reluctance* which many Americans feel for this measure.

'The reluctance, Sir, is laudable for the greater part. It is a patriotic emotion. In some cases, religion has a share in the sentiment. It is said, what check have we upon the members of Congress? If they abuse their power and establish an oligarchy, where are the means of redress? How shall we know, that they will return willingly into the ranks of citizens, after so great elevation? Is there not great reason to fear, that the American army may choose a different kind of government, from the rest of the people? And, say they, although Providence has kindly interfered so far for our preservation, how dare we expect his future assistance, when canceling the oaths of our allegiance, or staining the cause with perjury?

'To most of these questions we may make a satisfactory answer, without seeming to know that they were ever asked. As to danger arising from the love of power among ourselves, I cannot believe there is any. Nor do I think it quite proper for us all to abandon the Senate House, and leave the business to entire new men, while the country continues in its present dangerous situation. But the instant we are determined to cut off the small connexion, which remains with Great Britain, we ought by our conduct to convince our countrymen, that a fondness for power does not possess the smallest corner of our hearts. And we should from this moment take care, that the gift of all commissions be reserved to this House. This will cure the inquietudes of the patriotic breast.

'Now let me earnestly ask, why should we hesitate? Have you the least hope in treaty? Will you even think of it, before certain acts of Parliament are repealed? Have you heard of any such repeal? Will you trust these commissioners? Is there any act of parliament passed to ratify what

they shall do? No, they come from the King. We have no business with the King. We did not quarrel with the King. He has officiously made himself a party in the dispute against us. And now he pretends to be the umpire. Trust crocodiles, trust the hungry wolf in your flock, or a rattlesnak nei your bosom, you may yet be something wise. But trust the King, his Ministers, his Commissioners, it is madness in the extreme! Remember, I conjure you to remember! You have no legal check upon that legislature. They are not bound in interest, duty, or affection to watch over your preservation, as over that of their constituents; and those constituents are daily betrayed. What can you expect? You are not quite mad. Why will you trust them? Why force yourselves to make a daily resort to arms? Shall we never again see peace! Is this miserable country to be plunged in an endless war? Must each revolving year come heavy laden with those dismal scenes, which we have already witnessed? If so, farewell liberty, farewell virtue, farewell happiness!'

Immediately after making this speech, Mr Morris was sent on a special mission to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. For some reason not explained, the New England troops during the last campaign had been receiving higher wages, than those of New York and the other middle colonies. This discrimination of course created uneasiness, and produced an early remonstrance from the New York Congress, which seems not to have met with due attention. At all events, the evil was not corrected, and when levies of militia in the middle and eastern colonies were requested by the continental Congress for the defences of New York, and to strengthen the army, and this without any new provisions for regulating the amount of payment, the New York Congress thought it necessary to come to an immediate and explicit understanding on the subject.

Accordingly a letter was written to the Continental Congress, setting forth the grounds of complaint, and referring to Mr Morris as their authorized agent to make further explana-

tions, and to unite in devising any proper means of redress. The letter states, that a due regard to the honor of the colony would no longer permit a silent acquiescence in so odious a discrimination, which, if not resisted, might lead posterity to suppose, that it was founded on some just principles; for although the merit of the eastern forces was readily conceded, yet no one could pretend, that it was higher than that of the troops in the other colonies, or that justice did not demand them all to be put on the same footing. 'And it would neither be wise nor honest,' continues the letter, 'to conceal from the Congress the discontents, that have arisen from the continuance of this invidious distinction; they are too great and too general not to injure the service, and therefore merit the notice and attention of those, who alone can remove them.' The evil was further increased by the custom, which had become common with the inhabitants of New York, of leaving that colony and joining the New England regiments, because they received higher pay.

Armed with this letter, and with private instructions, Mr Morris appeared in Philadelphia, and laid the matter before the Continental Congress. In so plain a case, to be sure, it could hardly require much force of reasoning, or of eloquence, to convince the members of that assembly of the justice and necessity of his demands. The business was soon settled in accordance with his wishes, and a vote was passed, making the pay of all the troops in the middle and eastern colonies equal. This was done by raising the former to a level with the latter. The converse mode of reducing the higher to the lower, though better suited to the financial condition of the country, would probably have been a dangerous experiment. Having effected the purpose of his mission, Mr Morris returned, and after a week's absence resumed his post in the New York Congress.

The crisis of affairs was now becoming too critical and dangerous, to allow the New York Congress to deliberate or act upon any other concerns, than such as pertained to the immediate defence of the Colony. Sir William Howe arrived at

Sandy Hook on the 25th of June, and three days afterwards he was joined by the whole British fleet and forces from Halifax. An immediate attack was expected. The Congress at once invested General Washington with a kind of dictatorial power over the military strength of the colony, authorizing him to call out such portions of the militia, as he should think proper for defence, and march them at his discretion to any place within the limits of the colony, and also to apprehend disaffected persons, whom he thought dangerous to the security of the colony, and the liberties of America. Having entrusted this power to the commander in chief, the Congress had little to do but to second his views, and aid in executing his orders. Indeed, they retired from the city of New York on the 30th of June, and assembled at the White Plains three days afterwards. A few members only met at that time, nor was there a full number for business, till the 8th of July, the day appointed for the opening of the new Congress, to whom the people by a recent election had granted the powers of forming a plan of government, and deciding on the subject of independence.

In the mean time, a letter was received from the New York delegates in the Continental Congress, enclosing a draft of the Declaration of Independence, which had been reported on the 28th of June. This came to hand three days after its date, and, together with the draft, was referred to a committee, of whom Mr Jay was chairman. Another letter was also received, bearing date the second of July, in which the delegates stated the great embarrassments under which they labored, for want of instructions. The subject of independence had been agitated in Congress the day before, and was to be again brought forward on that day, and the proposition would certainly be adopted, as every other colony except New York had either sent their delegates positive instructions to that effect, or left them free to act according to their own judgment. As for themselves, their hands were tied, and they could neither vote one way nor the other.

What then should be done, after the resolution was final-

ly adopted? They had no authority from their constituents to take part in an independent government, and yet the condition of things was so peculiar in New York, while threatened by an overwhelming military invasion, that their votes in the Congress might be of the utmost importance to the interests of the colony, which they represented. Under these circumstances, what should they do? Should they retire from the Congress, or remain there? And when there, should they vote or not? 'Our situation,' say they, 'is singular and delicate, no other colony being similarly situated, with whom we can consult. We wait then for your earliest advice and instructions, whether we are to consider our colony bound by the vote of the majority in favor of independency, and vote at large on such questions as may arise in consequence thereof, or only concur in such measures, as may be absolutely necessary for the common safety and defence of America, exclusive of the idea of independency. We fear it will be difficult to draw the line; but once possessed of your instructions, we will use our best endeavors to follow them.'*

From these perplexities they were soon relieved. Independence was declared on the fourth of July, and the intelligence was communicated to the New York Assembly, by the following letter from the President of Congress.

'Philadelphia, July 6th, 1776.

'Gentlemen,

'Although it is not possible to foresee the consequences of human actions, yet it is nevertheless a duty we owe to ourselves and posterity, in all our public councils, to decide in

---

* Mr Jefferson says, in speaking of the Declaration; 'The delegates from New York declared they were for it themselves, and were assured their constitutents were for it,' but, as they had no authority by their instructions, 'they thought themselves not justifiable in voting on either side, and asked leave to withdraw from the question, which was granted.'—*Jefferson's Memoir, Correspondence, &c.* Vol. i. p. 15.

the best manner we are able, and to trust the event to that Being, who controls both causes and events, so as to bring about his own determinations.

'Impressed with this sentiment, and at the same time fully convinced, that our affairs *may* take a more favorable turn, the Congress have judged it necessary to dissolve all connexion between Great Britain and the American Colonies, and to declare them *free and independent States*, as you will perceive by the enclosed Declaration, which I am directed to transmit to you, and to request that you will have it proclaimed in your colony, in the way you shall think most proper.

'The important consequences to the American States of this Declaration of Independence, considered as the ground and foundation of a future government, will naturally suggest the propriety of having it proclaimed in such a manner, as that the people may be universally informed of it. I have the honor to be, &c.

'JOHN HANCOCK.'

This letter reached the new Congress, at the moment of its meeting at the White Plains, fully authorized and prepared to act on its contents, the draft of the Declaration having already been seven days in the hands of the committee. It came before the House immediately, (July 9th,) and the resolution was unanimously passed,—'That the reasons assigned by the Continental Congress, for declaring the united Colonies *free and independent States*, are cogent and conclusive, and that, while we lament the cruel necessity, which has rendered that measure unavoidable, we approve the same, and will, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, join with the other colonies in supporting it,—and that the delegates of this State in the Continental Congress be, and they are hereby, authorized to consult and adopt all such measures, as they may deem conducive to the happiness and welfare of the *United States of America*.'

Thus was the finishing stroke put to the Declaration of Independence. Every other colony had assented to it by their

delegates in the general Congress. It is curious to observe the rapid change in the tone of public feeling on this head in New York within a few weeks. The example of the other colonies, and the threatening and determined attitude of the British fleet and army, may be considered the primary causes. The moderate men, whether such from timidity or caution, were now convinced, that the enemy was in earnest, and that they must either go with their country or against it. No neutral ground remained. In this extremity they could not hesitate, though they would willingly have lingered on the outskirts of uncertainty, while they could see any door of hope open before them. By the union of this class with the resolute and zealous friends of the cause, a sudden and preponderating influence was gained, not only over their own actions, but over the minds of the people. When the subjects of a new plan of government and independence were referred to the voters, they were not requested simply to give instructions on these points to the members of the Congress then existing, but to elect other members and leave out old ones, if they should see fit, so that in fact the delegates to this last Congress were actually chosen anew. The consequence was, that the election turned upon the pivot of government and independence, and the voice of the electors may be understood by the *unanimous* vote of the Congress, in adopting the Declaration. A fortnight before, it would doubtless have met with many cold friends, and a few decided foes.

The next step was to publish the Declaration, and the notice of its recognition, throughout the state. This was ordered to be done in the several counties by beat of drum, and by such other modes of publicity, as the county committees might devise. Five hundred copies were printed and circulated in handbills. The House resolved and ordered, on the same day, that its own title should be changed, from that of the '*Provincial Congress of the Colony of New York*,' which it had hitherto borne, to that of the '*Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York*.'

A few days subsequently, a letter was received by the Convention from John Alsop, one of the New York delegates in Congress.

'Philadelphia, July 16th, 1776.

'Gentlemen,

'Yesterday our President read in Congress a resolve of your honorable body, dated the ninth instant, in which you declare New York a free and independent state. I cannot help saying, that I was much surprised to find it come through that channel. The usual method hitherto practised has been, for the Convention of each colony to give their delegates instructions to act and vote upon all and any important questions. And in the last letter we were favored with from your body, you told us that you were not competent, or authorized, to give us instructions on that grand question; nor have you been pleased to answer our letter of the second instant, any otherwise than by your said resolve, transmitted to the President. I think we were entitled to an answer.

'I am compelled therefore to declare, that it is against my judgment and inclination. As long as a door was left open for a reconciliation with Great Britain, upon honorable and just terms, I was willing and ready to render my country all the service in my power, and for which purpose I was appointed and sent to this Congress; but as you have, I presume, by that Declaration, closed the door of reconciliation, I must beg leave to resign my seat as a delegate from New York, and that I may be favored with an answer and my dismission. I have the honor to be, &c.

'John Alsop.'

Upon reading this letter, it was 'resolved unanimously, that this Convention do cheerfully accept Mr Alsop's resignation,' and a committee was appointed to draft a letter to the delegates in Congress, enclosing a copy of this resolve. The draft was made by Gouverneur Morris, and signed by the President of the Convention.

This was the last proceeding of the New York Convention

in the affair of independence. Considering the obstacles, which had impeded the progress of liberal opinions and decided measures in that colony, the result was, on the whole, more prompt and fortunate, than could have been expected. It came early enough to prevent the evil consequences of counteracting motives, distracted councils, or divided action, and to combine the several parts of the Union into one solid phalanx of opposition, to meet the shafts and repel the attacks of an invading foe. It may be regarded as a lucky circumstance, that Mr Jay returned when he did to the Provincial Congress. His eminent talents, the perfect integrity of his character, his knowledge of business, and above all his patriotism and zeal, must have contributed at the same time to communicate a salutary impulse to the people, and inspire his associates with a confidence in the strength of their cause.

The scene of confusion, which now prevailed and continued through the season, from the invasion of the enemy, the battle of Long Island, the surrender of New York, the capture of Fort Washington, the rencounters between the armies at White Plains, and other military disasters, deranged the proceedings of the Convention, and prevented any deliberations, except upon subjects of the most pressing necessity. That body was obliged to assume a migratory character, sitting first at the White Plains, afterwards successively at Haerlem, Kingsbridge, Odell's house in Phillips's Manor, Croton River, and lastly at Fishkill, a position in the interior beyond the incursions of the enemy. Here, by a vote of the Convention, the members supplied themselves with arms and ammunition, to prevent a surprise, in case any hostile bands should intrude upon their retirement, thus prepared to reverse the first part of Pliny's maxim, *cedant arma togæ*, whatever might be the fate of the other part, *concedat laurea linguæ*. They were often reduced to a very small number, organizing themselves one day in a Committee of Safety, and the next in Convention, as the case might be. The further consideration of a new form of government was suspended, but on the first of August a com-

mittee of thirteen was appointed, with instructions to draft and report a plan. John Jay, Gouverneur Morris, and Robert R. Livingston, were members of this committee. Another important committee was also instituted, about the same time, for devising means to establish a state fund. Mr Morris was chairman; and, indeed, he was usually made the leader in all financial concerns.

CHAPTER VII.

REGULATIONS RESPECTING TORIES.—DRAFT OF A CONSTITUTION REPORTED TO THE CONVENTION.—DEBATED IN CONVENTION.—COUNCIL OF APPOINTMENT.—VIEWS OF JAY, MORRIS, AND LIVINGSTON.—COUNCIL OF REVISION.—TOLERATION.—SLAVERY.—CONSTITUTION ADOPTED.

Among the most perplexing topics, which came from time to time under the notice of the New York Congress and Convention, was the case of the tories. So large a portion of the inhabitants, and many of them sustaining the first rank in society, were infected with principles deemed hostile to the interests of the country, that the manner in which they were to be dealt with, became a question of peculiar delicacy. When is was found, however, that these disaffected persons held correspondence with the enemy, refused to send delegates to the Congress, and were secretly arming themselves, prudence would not permit further delay, and resolves were passed authorizing the county committees to apprehend persons of this character, examine them, and decide on their guilt. The committees were likewise empowered to call on the militia, to aid in executing these resolves; but they were to sit in judgment under oath, and the witnesses were also to be sworn. The punishment was left to the discretion of the judges, provided it did not exceed three months' imprisonment at the expense of the offender. In some cases it was a banishment of seven years from the colony.

This system was pursued with vigilance, and some degree of success, till the British fleet arrived at New York, and the tories began to take new courage. A conspiracy was detected, in which there was reason to believe, that a plot was forming to seize General Washington, and betray him and his army into the hands of the enemy. This and other symptoms caused a new alarm, and the Provincial Congress resorted to another set of resolutions, and appointed a special committee, of their own numbers, with Gouverneur Morris at its head, to take this matter in charge. In these resolutions were inserted the names of certain persons, scattered throughout the colony, whom the committee were authorized to arrest and bring before them by a military force. Such persons as should be found guilty of affording aid or sustenance to the British fleets or armies, of decrying the continental currency, or of abetting any schemes to retard or oppose the measures taken by the colonies in their defence, were to be committed to safe custody. Under certain conditions, and according to the complexion of the offence, and character of the person, they were allowed to go at large on parole, after giving due security for their good conduct. Suspicious persons, whose influence was considered dangerous over the minds of the people in their neighborhood, were to be removed out of the colony. The power of military arrests was extended to the committees of towns and smaller districts, but the persons arrested had a right to appeal to the county committees for trial. A standing force, of one hundred and fifty men, was for some time kept up in Dutchess and Westchester counties, expressly for the purpose of apprehending tories.

The consequence of these regulations was, that the prisons soon became thronged. As no constitution of government had yet been formed, nor courts of justice established, the prisoners could not be tried by law, and these examinations by committees were only considered temporary, and the penalty rather a provision for security, than a punishment. Confiscations had not yet begun. To prevent the mischiefs of

crowded prisons, and the chance of the prisoners being rescued by their friends, several of the most conspicuous were consigned to the jails in Connecticut, where they were received and secured by the approbation of that government. Thirteen were at one time sent to Litchfield, among whom was the Mayor of New York, 'accused of treasonable practices,' although 'not of so black a die as those of the other conspirators.' The President of the Convention solicited in his favor, from the committee of Litchfield, 'every indulgence consistent with safe confinement.' He was charged with being concerned in the ways and doings of Governor Tryon.

A partial system of confiscations was put in practice, before the new form of government was completed. The personal property of all such inhabitants of the State, as had joined the enemy, or were then with the enemy, was ordered to be sold at public vendue, and the proceeds deposited in the treasury of the state, to be afterwards disposed of at the discretion of the legislature.

On the records of the Convention there is a resolve, which declares, that every person living in the State of New York, and deriving protection from the laws, owes allegiance to the State, that whoever among these gives aid or comfort to its enemies is 'guilty of *treason* against the State, and, being thereof convicted, shall suffer *the pains and penalties of death.*' I know not whether any one was ever condemned under this resolve. It was meant rather as a declaration, than a law. In fact, neither the Provincial Congress, nor the Convention, assumed the power of making laws, nor of meddling with courts of justice. Their resolutions and recommendations were considered as temporary, urged by the necessity of the case, designed to preserve as much order and security as possible, during the suspension of civil government, and to cease when that should again be raised on a regular and durable basis.

There is a curious clause in a letter from the Convention to President Hancock, which was drafted by Gouverneur Morris, and dated the eleventh of July, two days after the recognition

of independence by that House. 'We take the liberty,' say they in this letter, 'of suggesting to your consideration the propriety of taking some measures, for expunging from the Book of Common Prayer such parts, *and discontinuing in the congregations of all other denominations all such prayers*, as interfere with the interests of the American cause. It is a subject we are afraid to meddle with. The enemies of America have taken great pains to insinuate into the minds of the Episcopalians, that the Church is in danger. We could wish the Congress would pass some resolve to quiet their fears, and we are confident it would do essential service to the cause of America, at least in this State.' The Convention would seem to have forgotten the epistle from their delegates in Congress, written some months before, in which Congress is said to have cautiously avoided everything, that could possibly bear on any religious dispute. To erase words from a book, or to exact a penalty for reading them in public, is, to be sure, a possible thing; but what power, despotic or liberal, in a country where every individual is allowed to worship in his own way, could expect to take cognizance of the extemporaneous prayers of all the congregations, and prescribe the words which should be used or omitted? Such an attempt, seriously entered upon at that time by the national legislature, would have been a greater bar to union and independence, than all the deep plots of tories, combined with the power of the English fleets and armies.*

---

* The tories were not the only people, who gave trouble to the New York patriots. If we may believe their records, the women were chargeable with some share in their legislative embarrassments. In the journals of the Convention for August twenty-sixth, is the following sentence. 'A letter from John Slight, chairman of the committee of Kingston, was received and read, stating that the *women* surround the committee chamber, and say, if they cannot have *tea*, their husbands and sons shall fight no more.'

The President replied, that it was in contemplation to pass a general resolve about tea, and that the business was before a committee,

A letter from Mr Morris to his mother, written while the Convention was sitting at Fishkill, may properly be introduced in this place. It is alike honorable to his patriotism, and to his feelings as a son and a man.

'Fishkill, December 19th, 1776.

'Dear Madam,

'It is with inexpressible concern, that I am this day informed of the death of my sister. We all sustain in her a great loss, but you in particular, who are thus bereft of the companion of your age, must feel it most severely. Would to God it were in my power to alleviate the pangs of a sorrowing parent. But this is not my lot. My friend Wilkins will, I am sure, on this occasion do the duties of a child and a friend. There is one comforter, who weighs our minutes, and numbers out our days. It is He, who has inflicted upon us the weight of public and private calamities, and He best knows when to remove the burthen. I am sorry it is not in my power to see you at present. I know it is your wish, that I were removed from public affairs; indeed, as far as relates to my own ease and enjoyments, I wish so too. But I know it is the duty of every good citizen or man to preserve that post, in which by a superior order he is placed. Where the happiness of a considerable part of our fellow creatures is deeply concerned, we soon feel the insignificancy of an individual. And whatever lot that individual shall experience, while a conscious rectitude of conduct inspires and supports him, though he may be unfortunate, he cannot be miserable.

'What may be the event of the present war, it is not in man to determine. Great revolutions of empire are seldom achieved without much human calamity; but the worst, which can

---

who had been hitherto prevented from reporting.' I am therefore directed,' he adds, 'to acquaint you, that the Convention expect you will use your utmost endeavors to keep peace and good order amongst you, in the manner you best can, till such resolution shall be passed.'

happen, is to fall on the last bleak mountain of America, and he who dies there, in defence of the injured rights of mankind, is happier than his conqueror, more beloved by mankind, more applauded by his own heart.

'The death of my sister has incapacitated me for mirth; my letter, therefore, is of an improper complexion to one already afflicted. My love to my sisters, to Wilkins, whose integrity I love and respect, to the good natured Counsellor of Bermuda, and such others as deserve it. The number is not great.

'Pray believe me most sincerely your affectionate son.

'Gouverneur Morris.'

The Convention, or rather the Committee of Safety, for such was the character of the House at this time, adjourned from Fishkill on the fourteenth of February, 1777, and met at Kingston five days afterwards. The constitution had been lingering for two months in the hands of the committee, nor indeed was it reported to the Convention till a month later. There was a party, who thought this movement for a constitution premature, that it would be safer to wait for a period of more tranquillity, and a fairer prospect of calm reflection and deliberation among the members, and when the people likewise would be in a better condition to understand and receive the results of their labors. Of this opinion was Mr Jay, and as he was the first on the list of the committee for drafting the constitution, it is probable that his views of the salutary tendency of delay, may have retarded the progress of the work. He adopted the poet's motto, *festinare nocet*, and considered caution as the garland of wisdom, in a movement of so high a bearing on the destinies of the republic.

Tempore quæque suo qui facit, ille sapit.

At last, however, on the twelfth of March, the committee presented their report to the Convention, and the field of revision and discussion was opened to the House. It must be borne in mind, that the Convention was not assembled for the

express purpose of forming a constitution. All the usual business of that body was in progress at the same time. After the report was made, the constitution became the order of the day, and was called up and examined by paragraphs, from day to day, on such occasions as the other more pressing concerns of the House would permit. In this way it was five weeks under deliberation.

But after all, the instrument passed through the ordeal with very few amendments, and it is probable that Mr Jay's tardy speed, in preparing it, may have saved time in the end, by maturing the views of the committee, enabling them to get the sense of the most enlightened members, and thus to bring it in a more finished shape before the Convention. Two or three points only were debated with much warmth, or were essentially amended. The greatest difficulty was experienced, in determining where to lodge the power of appointing officers, both civil and military, and by what mode this power should be exercised. No wonder that this should be a perplexing topic to new beginners in the art of government-making, and especially when a plan embracing many original and untried features was to be contrived. It was easy to form a practical system, for regulating the powers and proceedings of the executive, legislature, and judiciary, as far as the specific duties of each were concerned, and also the electoral franchise, because there were very good models in several of the old colonial governments, and experience afforded all necessary light; but, in what hands to place the power of selecting officers of various ranks, how far this should be entrusted to the people in the form of elections, and how far confined within the narrower limits of executive control, these were questions full of difficulties and shrouded in doubts. After many schemes and suggestions, the Convention at last hit upon the memorable *Council of Appointment*, which afterwards figured so conspicuously in the politics of New York, and which by degrees brought down upon its head such a load of unpopularity, that, in

the Convention for amending the constitution in 1821, not a voice was raised to rescue it from utter perdition.

In the first draft that was presented to the Convention, the power of nominating officers to the legislature was vested in the governor. This clause was not liked by Mr Jay, nor by some other members of the committee, and when debated in the House, it was generally disapproved. The next thing was to find a substitute. Some proposed giving the whole power to the legislature; others, the nominating power to the legislature, and the appointing power to the governor; others were for uniting the governor and judges of the supreme court into a council for the purpose. In this state of fluctuating opinions, and after a day's fruitless debate on the last scheme, Mr Jay spent the evening at Robert R. Livingston's rooms, in company with Gouverneur Morris. Here they discussed the matter anew between themselves, and the result was a proposition by Mr Jay, fixing the clause as it was finally established in the constitution, by which the appointing power was vested in the hands of one senator from each district, making four in all, and the governor, who was to have only a casting vote, in case of an equal division between the other councillors. Morris and Livingston accorded to this project, and agreed to support it in Convention. Hence it was adopted, and such was the origin of that famous political anomaly, the *Council of Appointment* of New York. Mr Jay's idea was, likewise, that the speaker of the Assembly should make a sixth member of the council, to prevent the too frequent opportunities of the governor to give a casting vote, but, for what reason is not known, this feature was omitted in the ultimate project of the constitution.

In the event, moreover, Mr Jay's views were followed only in part. The appointment of the registers and clerks of courts, making in the whole a numerous list, was assigned by a separate article to the judges. This he thought a defect. By another clause the attorneys, solicitors, and counsellors at law were to be licensed by the judges of every court, in which they should respectively practise. This power he

would have vested wholly in the supreme court, which controlled all the courts in the state. A vast deal of trouble would thus be saved, and a greater respectability secured to the profession. A letter, which he wrote to Robert R. Livingston and Mr Morris, conjointly, a few days after the final adoption of the constitution, contains some pointed remarks on these subjects.*

Another article, which became by experiment scarcely less unpopular and impracticable, than the one just noticed, was that instituting a *Council of Revision*, or a body consisting of the governor, the chancellor, and the judges of the supreme court, by whom all acts of the legislature were to be revised, before they could become laws. Mr Morris was originally opposed to this article, and suggested an alteration, giving the governor alone a qualified veto, nearly the same in principle as has been since introduced into the new constitution of New York, as well as into those of other States, but the current set against him.

The reluctance to confide in the ability or integrity of the chief magistrate, both in this latter feature, and in that of the Council of Appointment, is indicative of the impressions com-

---

* In a letter from Mr Jay to Mr Morris, dated April 14th, 1778, after the constitution had gone into operation, he says; 'I wish you would write and publish a few more things on our constitution; censuring, however, an omission in not restraining the Council of Appointment from *granting offices to themselves*, with remarks on the danger of that practice.'

When the Convention assembled for amending the constitution, in September, 1821, the number of civil appointments under the control of the *Council of Appointment* amounted to 6,663; and the number of military appointments, to 8,287, making an aggregate of 14,950. Such an accumulation could hardly have been anticipated by the framers of the first constitution.

At the same time, the 'annual patronage' of the appointing power amounted to about *two millions of dollars*.—See Carter and Stone's Debates of the New York Convention, p. 162;—Introduc. p. vi.

municated by the examples of the colonial governors. The mistake was in not duly reflecting on the different origin of their authority. A governor, depending on the King of Great Britain for his office, would of course have different views of his duty, and different motives for discharging it, from the one, who derived his consequence and his power from the people, and who held the tenure of his office by their will. Few checks are necessary to curb the ambition, or countervail the selfish ends of a man thus situated; and, as confidence must rest somewhere, and power must be exercised by somebody, there can hardly be a safer depository than that, on which the eyes of all the people are fixed, which they have chosen themselves, and which they can change the moment they discover an abuse.

The mode of electing delegates to Congress, as pointed out by the constitution, originated with Mr Morris. Each House of Assembly was to nominate the full number of delegates, and the persons named in both lists were to be considered as chosen; and in cases where the lists differed, the additional number was to be chosen by joint ballot, out of the two lists. The same principle is retained in some of the elections prescribed in the new constitution of New York.

During the discussions, Mr Jay brought forward a somewhat singular paragraph, intended as the closing part of an article, designed for securing toleration, and granting 'to all mankind the free exercise of religious profession and worship.' To this Mr Jay proposed to add; 'except the professors of the religion of the church of Rome, who ought not to hold lands in, or be admitted to a participation of the civil rights enjoyed by the members of this State, until such time as the said professors shall appear in the supreme court of the State, and there most solemnly swear, that they verily believe in their consciences, that no pope, priest, or foreign authority on earth, has power to absolve the subjects of this State from their allegiance to the same. And farther, that they renounce, and believe to be false and wicked, the dangerous and

damnable doctrine, that the pope, or any other earthly authority, has power to absolve men from sins described in, and prohibited by, the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ; and, particularly, that no pope, priest, or foreign authority on earth, has power to absolve them from the obligation of this oath.' This clause was warmly debated, and when the question was put, it was carried in the negative, there being nineteen votes against it, and ten for it, and one county divided.

The next day Mr Jay renewed his proposition in the following modified shape; 'provided that the liberty of conscience hereby granted shall not be construed to encourage licentiousness, nor be used in such manner as to disturb or endanger the safety of the State.' This passed in the affirmative, but was afterwards amended on the motion of Mr Morris, so as to read in the closing part thus;—'or justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of this state.' This language is retained in the new constitution, and is the legal basis of toleration in the State of New York.

Mr Morris struggled hard to introduce another article, in which he had the hearty co-operation of Mr Jay and some others, and the purport of which was, that it should be earnestly recommended to the future legislature of New York, to take effectual measures for abolishing domestic slavery, as soon as it could be done consistently with public safety, and the rights of private property, 'so that in future ages every human being, who breathes the air of this State, shall enjoy the privileges of a freeman.' His idea was, to make a declaration to this effect an article in the constitution, but, although it met with favor, it did not succeed.

After all parts of the constitution had been critically canvassed, and agreed to in their order, the whole was read, (April 20th,) and adopted by every person present, with the exception of a single member, who desired his dissent might be entered on the minutes.

With this act, the instrument became binding on the State, for there was no provision, by which it was to be submitted to

the people for their acquiescence or rejection, as has been the uniform custom in more recent and tranquil times. This practice seems essential, indeed, to the validity of a constitution in a free government, which is no other than the voice of the people, dictating to themselves and to each other the terms, on which they agree to associate, and submit to the restraints and regulations of a civil compact. No doubt they have a right to prescribe the mode, by which the governing system shall be formed, and to delegate to a few the power of erecting it, and to consent beforehand to yield obedience to the skill and wisdom of these few, as much as in the case of a legislative act, or judicial decision; yet such a prodigal concession of power, without reserving any check upon its use, or control over its influence, is neither safe, nor judicious, nor consistent with the fundamental principles of political liberty in a democratic state. A constitution is in its nature a perpetual bond, unsusceptible of change, unyielding in the obligations it enjoins. A despot may frame it at his will, and make it what he pleases; custom may weave into its web many absurdities and impositions, which cannot be removed without marring its texture, or perhaps destroying its fabric altogether; but a constitution, emanating from the volition of a free people, is essentially their own workmanship, and should pass in all its details under their strict scrutiny, before it is set up as the imperious guardian of their liberties, and arbiter of their civil and social destiny.

The closing lines of Mr Jay's letter to Mr Morris and Mr Livingston, alluded to above, contain a few hints equally creditable to himself, and interesting, as the index of some of his opinions.

'The difficulty of getting any government at all,' says he, 'you know has long been an apprehension of little influence on my mind; and always appeared to be founded less in fact, than in a design of quickening the pace of the House. The other parts of the constitution I approve; and only regret that, like a harvest cut before it was ripe, the grain has shrunk.

Exclusive of the clauses, which I have mentioned, and which I wish had been added, another material one has been omitted viz. a direction that all persons holding offices under government should take an oath of allegiance to it, and renounce all allegiance and subjection to foreign kings, princes and states, in all matters ecclesiastical as well as civil. I should also have been for a clause against the continuation of domestic slavery, and the support and encouragement of literature, as well as some other matters, though perhaps of less consequence.

'Though the birth of the constitution was in my judgment premature, I shall nevertheless do all in my power to nurse and keep it alive; being far from approving the Spartan law, which encouraged parents to destroy such of their children, as, perhaps by some gross accident, might come into the world defective or misshapen.'

CHAPTER VIII.

PLAN FOR ORGANIZING THE NEW GOVERNMENT.—GOVERNOR CLINTON.—ALARMS AT THE EVACUATION OF TICONDEROGA.—MR MORRIS VISITS GENERAL SCHUYLER'S HEAD QUARTERS.—HIS LETTERS TO THE CONVENTION.—APPOINTED ON A COMMITTEE TO MEET DELEGATES FROM THE NEW ENGLAND STATES AT SPRINGFIELD.—MONOPOLY AND REGULATION OF PRICES.—MR MORRIS AND MR JAY VISIT GENERAL WASHINGTON'S HEAD QUARTERS AS A COMMITTEE FROM THE CONVENTION.—CURIOUS INTERVIEW OF GENERAL GATES WITH CONGRESS.—GENERAL SCHUYLER.—MR MORRIS'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIM.

THE first act of the Convention, after the finishing hand had been put to the constitution, was to appoint a committee to prepare a plan for organizing the new government. Livingston, Scott, Morris, Yates, Jay, and Hobart were the members of this committee, and their plan consisted in providing for the elections, by the people, and the temporary appointments of a chancellor and judges, that the courts of justice might go speedily into operation.* They also advised a *Council of Safety*, consisting of fifteen members, vested with all the powers necessary for preserving the safety of the State, till the constitutional legislature should be convened. Mr Morris was likewise one of this Council. Its duties are but imperfectly defined. The Convention fixed and published the time of elections, and returns were ordered to be made to the Council of Safety. It was their business to examine the votes, and de-

* Robert R. Livingston was elected chancellor; John Jay, Chief Justice; Egbert Benson, Attorney General. These appointments, together with those of the judges in the several counties, were made by the Convention, to continue in force till the legislature should meet, and the constitutional power of appointments should be organized.

clare who were chosen, and also to administer the oaths of office.

On the ninth of July all the returns had been made, and it was ascertained that George Clinton was chosen governor. He was sworn into office on the thirtieth of the same month, at Kingston, but he was then in the active command of the New York militia, and did not quit the field till after the defeat of Burgoyne, although he was at the same time in correspondence with the Council of Safety, and discharged through them all the necessary civil functions of his station. The Convention adjourned, or dissolved, and left affairs in the hands of the Council till the legislature convened, according to the provisions of the constitution.

While these things were going on in the heart of the state, a new alarm broke out on the northern frontiers. The evacuation of Ticonderoga by St Clair spread the greater panic and surprise, as it was unexpected, and least of all imagined, that he would make a precipitate abandonment and retreat, without a single faint effort to maintain his post, and hold the enemy in check for a time, if not to present a formidable barrier to his progress. The actual force and condition of St Clair's army had been overrated by the public. Hopes were raised high, the eyes of the nation were turned upon Ticonderoga, and when the news of the retreat went abroad, the disappointment was extreme, and the loud voice of complaint and censure, against the unfortunate general, was reiterated from one end of the continent to the other. Time proved that he had acted the part of a judicious and skilful officer; but the excitement of the moment was so great, caused by chagrin on the one hand, and alarm on the other, that all eyes were blind, and all ears deaf, to the true reasons of the case, and even to the palliating circumstances. It was enough, that this great frontier barrier was lost, and that the enemy was marching rapidly onward. The terror of his approach was particularly felt in the State of New York, which threatened to become the theatre of his ravages, his success, his triumph; and, as ill luck seldom comes

single handed, at this crisis the Indians began to break into the western borders, and carry dismay among the inhabitants of that region.

All these weighty concerns pressed heavily upon the Council of Safety, and called, or seemed to call, for speedy and efficient measures of government, which neither their power nor experience qualified them to concert or pursue. As a first step they appointed a committee to proceed to the head quarters of the northern department, with instructions to confer with General Schuyler on the means to be used by the State, in aid of his plans of defence or resistance. Mr Morris and Mr Yates were selected for this committee, on the tenth of July, and the former proceeded immediately to General Schuyler's head quarters, then at Fort Edward. His first letter to the President of the Council of Safety was dated at Albany, filled with the floating rumors of disasters at the north, and depredations at the west, without conveying any very definite information of either. Two days afterwards, on the sixteenth of July, he wrote from Fort Edward.

'Sir,

'I arrived here yesterday noon, and last evening had some little conversation with the General and others upon the state of our affairs. They are far from being such as could be wished. General Nixon's brigade, which ought to have consisted of at least fifteen hundred men, has four regiments, the whole of which do not contain six hundred. In short, not to enter into a tedious detail, two thousand six hundred continental troops, and two thousand militia, of which about one thousand are from this State, make the whole force in this quarter. To the westward there are about five hundred. If the enemy would follow, I know not when we should stop, as matters now stand. We have only two old iron field pieces. We can get no more, General Washington having ordered them all to the southern department. Fort Anne is abandoned, and Fort George will be so by tomorrow, if it be not sooner taken. Everything is moved away from this place, as fast as it can be

down to Moses Creek, a post five miles from hence, where the General proposes to assemble his army. If the enemy give us some time, I imagine the roads will be so obstructed, that, with the help of a few brave fellows in the woods, we should be able so to annoy General Burgoyne, as to prevent him from penetrating far into the country. A body of troops are to be formed to the eastward of this, in order to cover the Grants (Vermont) and harrass the rear of the enemy, if they come down Hudson's river. By the bye, I imagine the inhabitants of that country will join Burgoyne, who has issued a proclamation calling them in to confer with Colonel Skene. He has issued another well written proclamation, which has been freely circulated. It is dated at camp, near Ticonderoga, from which circumstance, as well as from the matter of it, I am led to believe he expects much aid from the tories. Upon the whole, I think we shall do very well, but this opinion is founded merely upon the barriers, which nature has raised against all access from the northward. I just now mentioned to the General the calling out of the militia of Tryon county. He says we may *call*, but we shall not get them. This is by no means a comfortable idea. I have the honor to be,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

Again the next day he writes from Saratoga.

'Sir,

'I left Fort Edward with General Schuyler at noon, and shall return thither some time tomorrow morning. Fort George was destroyed yesterday afternoon, previous to which the provisions, stores, and batteaux, were removed, and this morning about ten o'clock the last of them passed us about three miles to the northward of Fort Edward, at which place all the troops from the Lake are arrived, and they, together with some others, form an advanced post towards Fort George. About twelve hundred, perhaps more, are somewhat farther advanced upon the road to Fort Anne.

'The enemy have not yet made any motion that we know

of, nor indeed can they make any of consequence, until they shall have procured carriages, and then they may find it rather difficult to come this way, if proper care be taken to prevent them from procuring forage. For this purpose I shall give it as my opinion to the General, whenever he asks it, to break up all the settlements upon our northern frontier, to drive off the cattle, secure or destroy the forage, and also to destroy the sawmills. These measures, harsh as they may seem, are I am confident absolutely necessary. They ought undoubtedly to be taken with prudence, and temperately carried into execution; but I will venture to say, that if we lay it down as a maxim, never to contend for ground but in the last necessity, and to leave nothing but a wilderness to the enemy, their progress must be impeded by obstacles, which it is not in human nature to surmount; and then, unless we have, with our usual good nature, built posts for *their* defence, they must at the approach of winter retire to the place, from whence they first set out. The militia from the eastward come in by degrees, and I expect we shall soon be in force to carry on the *petite guerre* to advantage, provided always Burgoyne attempts to annoy us, for it is pretty clear that we cannot get at him. I am, &c.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

JOHN JAY TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

'Kingston, July 21st, 1777.

'Dear Morris,

'The situation of Tryon county is both shameful and alarming. Such abject dejection and despondency, as mark the letters we have received from thence, disgrace human nature. God knows what to do with or for them. Were they alone interested in their fate, I should be for leaving their cart in the slough, till they would put their shoulders to the wheel.

'Schuyler has his enemies here, and they use these things to his disadvantage. Suspicions of his having been privy to the evacuation of Ticonderoga spread wide; and twenty little circumstances, which perhaps are false, are trumped up to give

color to the conjecture. We could wish that your letters might contain paragraphs for the public. We are silent, because we have nothing to say; and the people suspect the worst, because we say nothing. Their curiosity must be constantly gratified, or they will be uneasy. Indeed, I do not wonder at their impatience, the late northern events having been such, as to have occasioned alarm and suspicion. I have not leisure to add anything more, than that I am very sincerely yours, &c.

'JOHN JAY.'

The Council of Safety were not well satisfied with the letters of the committee from camp, or rather of Mr Morris, for his associate did not join him till quite at the close of their mission. The clamors of the people stimulated the impatience of the Council, for more full and precise information, as may be seen by Mr Jay's letter, and it was expected, that the despatches of this committee would contribute, at least, to appease the former and tranquillize the latter. Mr Morris was a little piqued at the suggestion, that he was desired to write paragraphs for the newspapers, to amuse the curiosity of the public, and he took care to give a broad hint to this effect, in one of his letters to the Council. They wrote him in return a letter, which was drafted by his friend Robert R. Livingston, couched in terms of complaint and disapprobation, for neglecting certain points deemed essential, as objects for the inquiries of the committee. These preliminaries will explain the allusions in the first part of the following letter.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF SAFETY.

'Moses Creek, July 23d, 1777.

'Sir,

'We have received yours of the 19th, which has afforded us great pleasure, since we are enabled in some measure to collect from it our errand to the northward, "one of the most important objects of our journey" being, in the opinion of your honorable board, to write the news. Could we have conceiv-

ed, that this was your intention in appointing us a committee "to confer with Major General Schuyler upon such measures, as might from time to time appear necessary to be pursued by this State, for the aid and support of the northern department," we should have endeavored so to *correspond* with the Council, as to have informed them, as far as lay in our power, of the "*manner of the retreat from Ticonderoga, the number of the men that came off, whether any or how many were taken, whether the sick came away, whether the troops brought off their arms*," and the like. It is not in our power, Sir, to answer these important objects of our journey, because we are much in the dark about those matters, which attract the attention and strict scrutiny of your honorable board, and about which the General can give us no information; but we shall leave this place tomorrow morning, to wait upon you, and answer such questions as you shall be pleased to put to us.

'It was determined upon to leave the ground occupied by our advanced posts, upon the road to Fort Anne and Fort George, and retire to Fort Edward in the way to this place, having previously removed everything. About noon the picquet guard of the party, upon the Fort Anne road, was attacked by savages and British troops. It is not, we suppose, of great importance minutely to describe this engagement. We will therefore record nothing more upon your minutes, than that we drove off the enemy, and in so doing had one man killed and scalped, twelve more killed, and twelve wounded, five of them mortally. This evening the retreat was completed to this place, where the General would be strongly posted, if he had men. Three hundred of the militia of Massachusetts Bay went off this morning, in spite of the opposition, we should have said entreaties, of their officers. All the militia on the ground are so heartily tired, and so extremely desirous of getting home, that it is more than probable none of them will remain ten days longer. One half was discharged two days ago, to silence, if possible, their clamor; and the remainder, officers excepted, will soon discharge themselves, at

which time the army in the northern department will consist of about twenty-seven hundred continental troops, sick and well. We make no comments.

'But, Sir, Burgoyne cannot flee. If a body of three thousand men can be formed from the militia of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, somewhere upon the New Hampshire Grants; if General Washington can spare a reinforcement of fifteen hundred good troops to this army; if, discharging all the militia in the Forts and passes of the Highlands, the governor is put at the head of one third of the militia of the state, and two hundred good riflemen, and sent into Tryon county; we may laugh at Mr Howe and Mr Burgoyne. We are too ignorant of the situation of affairs to the southward, to say whether these things are practicable, and, therefore, give our sentiments on matters as they appear. We have the honor to be, &c.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.
'ABRAHAM YATES, JR.'

Thus ended the mission to the northern army, the committee having returned shortly after inditing the above epistle. They had made such inquiries, and such arrangements with General Schuyler, as circumstances would admit, and were prepared to give all requisite information to the Council of Safety, on their arrival at Kingston.

Meantime, during Mr Morris's absence, he had been appointed on a committee with Mr Hobart, to attend, on the part of New York, a convention of delegates from all the New England States, about to assemble at Springfield, in Massachusetts. The object of this convention was, to consult on the mutual interests of the States there represented, particularly in regard to the condition of the currency and prices. From the beginning of the war, much perplexity and much distress had been produced by the spirit of monopoly, and the exorbitant prices demanded for the necessaries of life. The depreciation of the currency increased the evil, since the price of articles would not be in proportion only to their quantity in

market, and to the wants of the community, but also to the unquestionable value of the money, or substitute for money, which was to be received for them. Certain persons, who became dealers and speculators, and whose patriotism was measured by the scale of their pecuniary gains, took advantage of the disorders of the times, and, by purchasing in large quantities, and selling at such times, places, and rates as they chose, imposed an intolerable burden on that portion of the people, who could only buy in small amounts, and as their wants dictated. The soldiers and their families were sufferers in a very peculiar degree, because the wages of a soldier were fixed, and not subject to fluctuate with the changing value of the currency in which he was paid, whereas labor in other pursuits, like every other commodity of exchange, rose in nominal value as the money declined. At least, such was the view generally taken of these matters, though some persons regarded the monopolizing system, as rather an advantage than an injury, for reasons, which need not be examined in this place.

The mischievous effects of these practices, treacherous, as it was believed, alike to the cause of liberty and the claims of humanity, were severely felt in the New England States. Plans had been devised, and laws passed, to discourage, defeat, and punish them, but with little effect. The motives of avarice, the allurements of gain, had a stronger influence than the power of government, the love of country, or the voice of conscience. Almost every article of sale passed through the hands of forestallers and monopolizers, who either disregarded the laws, or contrived to evade them. Among other restrictions, an embargo law was passed in Massachusetts, prohibiting the exportation out of that State of certain articles, embracing all the necessaries of life and military supplies. This law extended also to importations. Hence it caused great complaints in the neighboring States, particularly in New York, as many of the citizens of that State, who were engaged in commercial enterprises, found it convenient to enter their ships in some of the ports of New England, and thence transport their goods

over land. The embargo law of Massachusetts was a bar to this transportation, and compelled the importers to sell their goods on the spot. This operated not only as a loss to the owners, but an injury to the State of New York, where the goods were wanted to supply the needs of the people.

To regulate matters of this sort, a convention of delegates from the New England States had already been held in Providence the year before, who favored their consituents with a set of resolves, recommendations, and a scale of prices, but, with whatever wisdom their deliberations may have been conducted, or whatever new light was struck out on the occasion, things did not mend afterwards, the people perceived no change, and felt no relief. To seek a further remedy, therefore, Massachusetts proposed another convention, to meet at Springfield, on the thirtieth of July, and invited New York to take a part. Mr Morris was selected on account of his knowledge of finance, and the principles of commercial intercourse, which had been among his favorite studies, but, for reasons that will soon appear, he did not attend the convention. His associate attended, and the business was conducted on the grounds of the original proposition.

Indeed, the case was a very simple one. The root of the whole difficulty lay in the deranged state of the currency, or, in other words, the *want of money*. The country was deluged with paper; each State had thrown out its share, and more than its share; the Continental Congress had contributed its millions; depreciation ensued, rapid, inevitable, irremediable, till every person found to his astonishment, that the more money he possessed, the more obvious was his progress in the way to poverty and ruin. The convention recommended *taxation*, and a redemption of the paper; a very natural method of getting out of the difficulty, but not so easy of execution, where the means of paying taxes did not exist. They recommended borrowing money, a process not less dubious, where there are no lenders, and where the borrowers are without credit. On the whole, the convention left this part of the

subject just where they had found it. They proposed, however, that the laws regulating prices, and those prohibiting internal transportation, should be repealed.

Mr Morris, as we have seen, did not go to the convention. For some purpose connected with the northern army, it was deemed important that he should visit General Washington's head-quarters, and the Congress at Philadelphia. Meantime, great dissatisfaction began to prevail in the public mind, and particularly with the people of New England, respecting General Schuyler, and his command of the northern army. The unfortunate events of Ticonderoga were charged upon him, and even broad hints were circulated, that he had a better understanding with the enemy, than was consistent with his station or his integrity. On the day after Mr Morris left the camp at Moses Creek, General Schuyler wrote to him; 'I am extremely sorry, that you are obliged to go to Springfield without seeing the Council of Safety. I find by a letter from a friend there, that my reputation suffers much, and that people suggest the Fort was evacuated by my order, and that I had made such a disposition whilst I was there, as indicated an intention to deliver it to the enemy. I wish you would write the Council of Safety a line on the subject, and inform them of what you know.' Such was the impression, and for the moment it could not be removed, although General Schuyler had no knowledge of an intended evacuation of Ticonderoga, till after it occurred, and was as much surprised at the catastrophe, as any member of the Council of Safety. The clamor spread widely and rapidly, and the occasion was seized upon with eagerness by General Schuyler's enemies in Congress, who, by sounding an alarm, and insisting that the New England troops would not join the army while under his command, were successful in causing him to be superseded by a resolve of Congress, and General Gates to be appointed in his stead.

The following curious extract of a letter from a member of Congress, dated June, nineteenth, 1777, will give a clue to

some of the secret causes of this event, as well as a little insight into the state of feeling and party, which then prevailed among the members. It is only necessary to premise, that, after the retreat of the American army from Canada the year before, General Gates had commanded in that quarter till the month of May, when his command by an order of Congress was embraced within that of General Schuyler. At this step General Gates was displeased, and Gordon intimates, (who, by the way, is often too much of a partizan to be a just historian,) that it was brought about by a manœuvre of certain persons in Congress. Be this as it may, the General allowed his temper to be much ruffled on the occasion, as will appear by the extract now to be quoted.

'Yesterday,' writes the member of Congress, 'Major General Gates arrived in town, and about twelve o'clock at noon, Mr Roger Sherman informed Congress, that he was waiting at the door, and wished admittance. Mr Paca desired to know for what purpose. Mr Sherman replied, to communicate intelligence of importance. He was accordingly ushered in, and, after some awkward ceremony, he sat himself in a very easy cavalier posture in an elbow chair, and began to open his budget.

'The intelligence he communicated was, that the Indians were extremely friendly, much delighted with seeing French officers in our service, and other common place matters, which at present I cannot recollect. Having thus gone through the ostensible part of the plan, he took out of his pocket some scraps of papers, containing a narrative of his birth, parentage, education, life, character, and behavior. He informed the House, that he had quitted an easy, happy life, to enter into their service, from a pure zeal for the liberties of America, that he had strenuously exerted himself for its defence, that some time in March, last year, he was appointed to a command in the northern department, and that a few days since, without having given any cause of offence, without accusation, without trial, without a hearing, without notice, he had receiv-

ed a resolution, by which he was, in a most disgraceful manner, superseded in his command. Here his oration became warm, and contained many reflections against Congress, and many insinuations against Mr Duane, whose name he mentioned, and related some conversation, which he said had passed between him and that gentleman on his way to Albany. Here Mr Duane arose, and, addressing himself to the President, hoped the General would observe order, and cease from personal applications, as he could not in Congress enter into any controversy with him, on the subject of any former conversation.

'Mr Paca caught the fire, and immediately moved, that the General might be ordered to withdraw. I seconded the motion, observing that the conduct of the General was unbecoming the House to endure, and himself to be guilty of. Mr Dyer, Mr Sherman, and some others of his eastern friends, arose and endeavored to palliate his conduct, and to oppose his withdrawing. On this, Mr Middleton, Mr Burke, Colonel Harrison, and two or three others arose, and there was a general clamor in the House, that he should immediately withdraw. All this while the General stood upon the floor, and interposed several times in the debates; however, the clamor increasing, he withdrew. A debate then ensued, concerning the propriety of the General's conduct, and that of the members, who, contrary to parliamentary rules, contended for his staying after a motion had been made and seconded, that he should withdraw. The want of candor in Mr Sherman, who asked his admittance on pretence of his giving the House intelligence, was much inveighed against. Congress at length came to the determination, that General Gates should not be again admitted on the floor, but should be informed, that Congress were ready and willing to hear, by way of memorial, any grievances, which he had to complain of. Here the matter ended, not, as you will observe, to his credit or advantage.'

This occurred about six weeks before General Gate's reap-

pointment to supersede General Schuyler in the northern department, and it may well be imagined, that this latter measure was adopted with but little unanimity of feeling in the House, however much the dictates of policy might induce to a concert of action. Mr Jay accompanied Mr Morris to Philadelphia, but they were probably too late to effect all the beneficial objects, which they had in view. Washington's army was then on its march through Pennsylvania to meet General Howe. The following correspondence between Mr Morris and General Schuyler will afford some additional explanations of this subject.

TO MAJOR GENERAL SCHUYLER.

'Kingston, August 27th, 1777.

'Dear Sir,

'Upon my return from Albany, it was at my request determined, that, instead of going to Springfield, I should repair to Head-Quarters. In consequence, with Mr Jay, I went thither. Unfortunately we did not arrive at Philadelphia, until the day it had been determined to send Gates to take the command of the northern department. You will readily believe, that we were not pleased at this resolution, and I assure you for my own part, I felt exceedingly distressed at your removal, just when changing fortune began to declare in our favor. Congress, I hope, will perceive, that our successes have been owing to the judicious plans adopted previous to your removal.

'Our representations of your situation have obtained, as by this time you must be sensible, such reinforcement for the northern armies, as will enable Gates to act with eclat, if he has spirit and understanding sufficient for that purpose. His situation is certainly an eligible one. As his friend, I am pleased at the opportunity he has of acquiring honor, while I sincerely lament his possessing this opportunity at your expense. However, it was become necessary, for the eastern folks declared, that their people would not march while you had the command. In misfortunes, great minds rise superior to adversity, and this too, whether they are of a public or private nature.

'With that incautiousness natural to me, and of which I scorn to divest myself among my friends, let me say, that I think you will find it for your honor to resign, but in this, *festina lente*, the hour is not yet come. I wish you would direct the plan you think best for the northern armies, pointing out the posts necessary to be taken, the manœuvres to be made, and the like, which your intimate knowledge of the country enables you to do better than most men. It seems to me we should contrive to possess the height to the northward of Fort Edward, if it be practicable to maintain it, and then, by keeping parties around Burgoyne's army, intercept his supplies, and force him to quit his post at Batten Kill. This is a reverie, but clearly something capital may be done; perhaps he may be attacked with success in his lines. I am inclined to believe, that the unexpected sight of our troops, advancing with fixed bayonets without firing a shot, would so intimidate his soldiers, that they would not stand. But to the purpose. I could wish that having digested your plan, you would send it to Gates, as the continuation of what you intended, if successful to the eastward and westward, which, thank God, you have been. Introduce it to him under the idea, that you think it your duty to contribute to the success of the American arms, as well out of as in power, and send a copy of the whole to Congress, in which you may also, with great propriety, mention as a reason why you have not obeyed their order, that General Gates was so long on his journey, that the attention, which you were obliged to pay to the northern army, would not permit you to provide for yours. This, and Indian affairs, are good causes for your stay. I am, yours,

'Gouverneur Morris.'

GENERAL SCHUYLER TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

'Albany, September 7th, 1777.

'Dear Sir,

'The day before yesterday I was favored with yours of the 27th of August. I thank you for sympathizing with me, on my removal from the command in this department, at a time

when our affairs were at the worst, and when no change could happen, but what must be for the better. Congress, I find, complain of me for painting in strong colors the situation we were in; and yet, I dare say, if I had not done it, and any capital misfortune had happened, they would have asked why they had not been truly informed. But my crime consists in not being a New England man in principle; and, unless they alter theirs, I hope I never shall be. General Gates is their idol, becuase he is at their direction.

'If an inquiry into my couduct had not been ordered, I should have resigned, the moment when Gates relieved me; but, as soon as the former has taken place, I shall certainly quit. Of this I have advised Congress. I believe a certain set will wish, that they had not urged for an inquiry. I shall make my defence in such a manner, as that the public may see what has been my conduct, and what that of others; and then they may judge for themselves; and I trust they will easily discern, that the cause of our misfortunes in this department has originated, where they perhaps little expect it.

'When General Gates took the command, I informed him, that I had advised Congress of my intention to remain some time in the department, to afford him any assistance in my power, and entreated he would call upon me whenever he thought proper. He has, however, not done it. He sent for General Ten Broeck from town, to a council of war, but not for me. After that, I could not with propriety give him my opinion of what ground he ought to possess, if Burgoyne should retreat. What I intended to have done, had I remained in the command, and been reinforced, I fully communicated to him, and showed the orders I had given Generals Lincoln and Arnold. Hitherto he has not, as I am informed, made any other disposition of his force, which daily increases. He may certainly oblige General Burgoyne to retire immediately, or compel him to fight at a great disadvantage; but Gates is totally ignorant of the country, and, although he may get people that can give him the best information, yet it falls vastly

short of being personally well acquainted with the passes and defiles, which every country has more or less. From this defect I fear every advantage will not be taken that might.

'I am just now informed that Burgoyne has drawn all his troops from Skenesborough and Fort Anne. This, with the bridge he has thrown over Hudson's river, indicates that he means to attack our army. If Lincoln is within a day's march of Saratoga, and is ordered that way, I wish Burgoyne may advance, and Gates too. If the latter takes post at Stillwater, Lincoln might be in the rear of Burgoyne before he could attack Gates; in which case the British army must be totally ruined. Nor need ours apprehend a want of provisions, should Burgoyne be so posted as to render it imprudent to attack him; for there are means of sending on the supplies, and if they escape the attention of Gates, I will point them out. I am, &c.

'PHILIP SCHUYLER.'

TO MAJOR GENERAL SCHUYLER.

'Kingston, September 18th, 1777.

'Dear Sir,

'The receipt of your favor of the seventh, last night, gave me great pleasure. I am happy for the sake of America, that your sentiments so perfectly coincided with my own. The commander in chief of the northern department may, if he pleases, neglect to ask, or disdain to receive advice, but those who know him will, I am sure, be convinced that he wants it. Fortune may make him a great man, in the estimation of the vulgar, who will fix their estimation at their own price, let the intrinsic value be what it will, but it is not in the power of fortune to bestow those talents, which are necessary to render a person superior to her malice. This being the case, it is but equal, that, between competitors, she should take the weaker side to preserve the natural equality of mankind.

'I am confident that the proper advantages will not be taken of Burgoyne's situation. We have no chance, I fear, in that

quarter from management. The only resource, therefore, will be a battle, and I doubt our skill to manage that. At any rate, the season closes fast, and if Burgoyne cannot get to Albany, he must at least retire to Ticonderoga. I learn that Gates's army is eleven, and Lincoln's five thousand. *Tant mieux—sed quære de hoc.* I am also told that the Indians are determined to take up the hatchet for us. If this be true, it would be infinitely better to wear away the enemy's army, by a scrupulous and polite attention, than to violate the rules of decorum and the laws of hospitality, by making an attack upon strangers in our own country.

'From Peekskill we have intelligence, that the enemy have marched into New Jersey with five thousand men, and from their motions seem determined to attempt the western pass of the mountains. Either their numbers are exaggerated greatly, or they mean some capital diversion. I rather think the former, and that their object is merely to return the compliment, which Sullivan paid them on Staten Island.

'General Washington, as you will have heard before this reaches you, has had a severe conflict with Howe. He was obliged to retire. Our loss is far from inconsiderable. Howe, I imagine, will get Philadelphia. This will be determined at Swede's Ford on the Schuykill. If we can beat him, he will be, if not ruined, yet as near it as any man need be. If the contrary happens, we must, to say the best of it, have another winter's campaign.

'The Chief Justice (Jay) is gone to fetch his wife. The Chancellor (Livingston) is solacing himself with his wife, his farm, and his imagination. Our Senate is doing, I know not what. In Assembly we wrangle long to little purpose. You will think so, when I tell you, that from nine in the morning till dusk in the evening, we were employed in appointing Scott, Pawling, Yates, and Webster to be the council of appointment. I tremble for the consequences, but I smile, and shall continue to do so, if possible. We have not appointed delegates, nor do I know when or whom we shall appoint. We have some

principles of fermentation, which must, if it be possible, evaporate before that business is entered upon. We are just about to think of a Militia Law, and I should be happy to be informed of your sentiments, or rather plans, upon that subject. It is doubtless of importance, and the mode now to be adopted, whether good or evil, will have a very distant operation. It will become a principal part of the jurisprudence of the State, and, as such, shed an influence upon the Constitution. I am yours, &c.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

GENERAL SCHUYLER TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

'Albany, October 12th, 1777.

'Dear Sir,

'If Arnold's advice had been pursued, the enemy would have been routed on the twentieth of last month, and the fortification below would, in all probability, not have been attacked. The same want of vigor has taken place, after the action of the seventh instant. Burgoyne retreated on the eighth, at night; was followed by an inferior body on the afternoon of the ninth; and now occupies the heights between the barracks at Saratoga and Fishkill, with a dispirited army of less than five thousand; whilst General Gates's army of fifteen thousand are looking at him; for the General, by all accounts, has never yet been within ken of the enemy. This may be prudent, it is not very gallant. He knows Burgoyne cannot retreat, and will, therefore, not risk an engagement. But if Clinton should be able to push up to this place, the tables may be turned upon him. I hope that, however, will not be the case.

'Saratoga is destroyed. * I expected it would be so. I wrote you, or the Speaker so, some days ago. I hear Gates intends to write Burgoyne on the subject of his devastations.

* That is, General Schuyler's buildings and property at that place, which were burnt and destroyed by the enemy.

I fear he will not succeed better than in his former correspondence. I am yours,

'PHILIP SCHUYLER.'

It is the province of the historian to collect facts, combine circumstances, and weigh events with an impartial hand, before he pronounces a judgment on the actions of a man, in a prominent and responsible station; and whoever will do this, in regard to General Schuyler, will come to a very different decision from that, to which he might naturally be led by the treatment he received from Congress. Whatever causes or motives may have operated at the time, to bring about his removal, there can be but one opinion now, as to the necessity or justice of that measure. It was the effect of a temporary excitement founded on false impressions, of a prejudice for which no good reason could be assigned, and of a bitter party spirit, ready to immolate character and hazard the nation's best interests, to gratify its own narrow and perverted aims.

'Your enemies,' says a member writing to General Schuyler from Congress, 'your enemies, relentless, and bent on your destruction, would willingly involve you in the odium of losing Ticonderoga. The change of command was not, however, founded on that principle, but merely on the representation of the Eastern States, that their militia, suspicious of your military character, would not turn out in defence of New York, while you presided in the northern department. So confident were they in these assertions, and such, from your own representations, was the gloomy aspect of our affairs there, that the southern members were alarmed, and we thought it prudent not to attempt to stem the torrent. It was, however, agreed and declared, as I before hinted, that the eastern prejudices against you were the only motives for your recall. The application of eastern generals for your continuance in the department, and the respectable reinforcement from New Hampshire, which so palpably contradict the assertions that were the basis of your removal, are no small occasion of triumph to some of us, and will not speedily be forgotten. We

have much to expect from the northward. Give us the earliest intelligence. Every mouth is full of the praises of Herkimer, Stark, Gansevoort, and Willet.'

The foundation of this prejudice of the Eastern States against General Schuyler cannot, perhaps, at this day, be easily ascertained. As a gentleman of a strong and cultivated mind, integrity, honor, and public spirit, none stood higher in his own State, or possessed more entirely the confidence of his copatriots. In his correspondence, he was sometimes betrayed into expressions not well suited to win by their suavity, or subdue by their forbearance, and now and then he incautiously disturbed the nerves of Congress, by the tenor of his letters. A friend writes to him from that body; 'You know Congress, like a hysteric woman, wants cordials. Write truths, without making any reflections of your own.' Some of his letters to the legislature of Massachusetts assumed a tone, but little calculated to allay jealousies, or gain friends. This was impolitic, but it could in no degree justify the ill treatment he received as a public man, and especially so abrupt a dismissal from a command, which he had up to that moment conducted with all the energy, address, and ability, that it was possible for any officer to exercise under the same circumstances. His plans were well laid, and the crown of victory was clearly within his reach, when another stepped into his place, who, to secure the prize, had only to stand still and wait the onward tide of events. General Gates was successful, where it would have been impossible for any man, with a particle of prudence, to fail. Fortune was his friend, and to her caprices, more than to all other causes combined, he was indebted for the glory he acquired in gathering the laurels of Saratoga.*

---

*A just and well written tribute to the character of General Schuyler, may be found in Chancellor Kent's late Discourse before the Historical Society of New York.

CHAPTER IX.

MR MORRIS CHOSEN A DELEGATE TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS FROM NEW YORK.—TAKES HIS SEAT.—PASSES THE WINTER AT VALLEY FORGE ON A COMMITTEE FROM CONGRESS.—HIS INTIMACY WITH WASHINGTON.—ARRANGEMENTS OF THE ARMY.—HE DRAWS UP A PAPER FOR CONGRESS ON THE STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS. —DEBATES IN CONGRESS ON A PROVISION FOR HALF PAY TO THE OFFICERS.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR JAY AND GENERAL WASHINGTON.—CONWAY'S INTRIGUES.—GENERAL GREENE.

On the thirteenth of May the Convention, which formed and adopted the Constitution of New York, dissolved itself, as we have seen, and left the affairs of government in the hands of a Council of Safety. Before the dissolution, a provisionary appointment was made of five delegates to represent the State in Congress, till the Assembly should convene under the new Constitution. Gouverneur Morris was one of these delegates, but the critical posture of affairs in New York, and the demand for his presence in the councils of his own State, prevented his joining Congress, till the time had expired for which he was chosen. On the third of October, when the legislature was convened, a new appointment of delegates took place, in the mode prescribed by the Constitution. Mr Morris was re-elected, but it does not appear by the journals of Congress, that he took his seat till the twentieth of January following.

He had now been nearly three years in public life, and he entered Congress with a reputation for talents, general intelligence, zeal, and activity in business, probably not surpassed by that of any other person of his age in the country, being not yet twenty six years old. Congress manifested at an ear-

ly hour the estimation in which they held his abilities and character, by appointing him, the very day he presented his credentials, on a committee of great importance and responsibility. It will be recollected, that this was the memorable winter, in which the American army was at Valley Forge, enduring unparalleled sufferings from the effects of a harassing and protracted campaign, from want of clothing, want of food, exposure to the inclemency of the season, and all the catalogue of ills incident to a condition so deplorable. Add to this, that the various departments of the army had become much deranged; plans and regulations, the result of inexperience, had been unskilfully contrived in its organization, and imperfectly executed by officers and agents, unacquainted with their duty, and unpractised in the military art. In short, the general system had grown up by additions, changes, and modifications, from time to time, as the exigences of the case demanded, with little reference to the relations and symmetry of the whole. The commander in chief called loudly on Congress for a reform, and, as soon as he was established in his winter's encampment, he urged them to take the matter speedily in hand, that he might be prepared to commence the next campaign with a force better regulated, more efficient, increased in numbers, and improved in military skill.

To aid these designs, a committee of five members was appointed, with instructions to proceed to head-quarters at Valley Forge, and enter into a full investigation of the subject with the commander in chief, and report such measures as should be deemed expedient. Mr Morris was placed on this committee, and he and his associates repaired to Valley Forge without delay, Congress being then at York Town. Soon after their arrival, General Washington laid before them, in writing, an elaborate exposition of the existing state of the army, pointing out the disorders and deficiencies, together with their causes, and suggesting in detail such reforms and improvements, as he considered essential to put the military establishment on a respectable footing. This communication

served as the basis of the committee's proceedings, and in fact its principles and provisions were in the end adopted by them. It extended not only to the military arrangement, but to the entire economy of the army, embracing a plan for completing the defective regiments, regulating rank and promotion, new modeling the quartermaster general's, commissary's, clothing, hospital, and paymaster's departments, and for augmenting those of the artillery and engineers. The committee remained in camp nearly three months. Mr Morris returned to York Town about the middle of April. The new plan for the army was reported to Congress, and approved.

There was another subject in which Mr Morris took a lively concern, and which was largely discussed in camp, namely, some permanent provision for the officers, on the part of the nation. General Washington had repeatedly expressed the strongest solicitude on this subject. In writing to Congress he says; 'If my opinion be asked, with respect to the necessity of making this provision for the officers, I am ready to declare, that I do most religiously believe the salvation of the cause depends on it; and, without it, your officers will moulder to nothing, or be composed of low and illiterate men, void of capacity for this or any other business. To prove this, I can with truth aver, that scarce a day passes without the offer of two or three commissions; and my advices from the eastward and southward are, that numbers, who had gone home on furlough, mean not to return, but are establishing themselves in more lucrative employments. Let Congress determine what will be the consequence of this spirit. Personally, as an officer, I have no interest in their decision, because I have declared, and now repeat it, that I never will receive the smallest benefit from the half pay establishment; but as a man, who fights under the weight of a proscription, and as a citizen, who wishes to see the liberty of his country established upon a permanent foundation, and whose property depends upon the success of our arms, I am deeply interested.'

On other occasions General Washington, with renewed earnestness, urged these considerations and others equally powerful on Congress, and suggested as a provision, not more just than politic, an establishment of half pay after the war. The views of the commander in chief were entered into very heartily by Mr Morris, but they met with a cool reception from some of the members of Congress.

Upon what ground a scheme, manifestly so necessary and equitable, was deemed inadmissible by any person, as we have no knowledge of the debates of the old Congress, it might now be fruitless to inquire. When this subject was brought forward, however, it encountered opposition. On the minds of some there would seem to have been doubts, as to the power of Congress to make such a provision. It was moved to send certain propositions to the States, for the purpose of ascertaining the general opinion, before they should be acted on by Congress. The motion was lost, though supported by several individuals, including all the New England members except two. It is probable, that no one of the representatives was decidedly opposed to some sort of remuneration to the officers, but they differed in regard to the amount and mode of payment. Some were for fixing on a definite amount, to be paid after the conclusion of the war, according to the rank of the officers; others were for an establishment of half pay for life; others for a term of years. The plan of half pay for life, as proposed by General Washington, and strenuously supported by Mr Morris, passed in the affirmative by a small majority, at one stage of the debates. All the New England members, and three out of four from South Carolina, voted against it; and the resolution was afterwards modified, by reserving to the United States the power of redeeming at any time the claims of an officer, on payment of a sum equal to the half pay of six years.

A motion was again subsequently made to refer the matter to the consideration of the legislatures of the several States. Every New England member, except one, voted for this mo-

tion, but it was lost. After a protracted discussion, it was finally resolved, that the half pay to officers should continue only seven years, and that each non-commissioned officer and soldier, who remained in the army till the end of the war, should receive a reward of eighty dollars.

Shortly after returning from camp, Mr Morris was appointed on several committees, that required his assiduous attention, and much labor. Among others were those for drafting instructions to General Gates, who had just been directed to take command on the North River; for an examination into the medical department of the army, concerning which loud complaints had been forwarded to Congress; for considering and reporting the terms to be offered to British officers and soldiers, who might choose to become citizens of the United States; for arranging the plan of a cartel for the exchange of prisoners; and for reporting on the affair of Ticonderoga.*

His opinions and acts at this time will be further elucidated, by the following letter to Mr Jay, dated Valley Forge, February 1st, 1778, and of course written a very short time after his arrival in camp.

'Dear Jay,

'Congress have sent me to this place, in conjunction with some other gentlemen, to regulate their army, and in truth not a little regulation has become necessary. Our quartermaster and commissary departments are in the most lamentable situation. Opportunities have been neglected the last campaign, which were truly golden ones, but omnipotent fatality had, it seems, determined that the American capital should fall. Our sentiments on this occasion are so perfectly coincident, that I will not enlarge.

'The mighty Senate of America is not what you have

* In a letter to him on this subject, General Schuyler writes; 'Let me entreat you not to be tardy. Give me a trial. If that is not expedient, I trust the resolutions will be such, as to make amends for the injuries I have sustained.'

known it. The Continental Congress and currency have both depreciated, but, in the hands of the Almighty architect of empires, the stone, which the builders have rejected, may easily become head of the corner. The free, open, and undisturbed communication with the city of Philadelphia, debauches the minds of those in its vicinage, with astonishing rapidity. This State is sick even unto the death. Just before the reduction of the forts, the enemy balanced exactly upon the point of quitting the city, and a straw would have turned in either scale.

'Our troops,—*Heu miserors!* The skeleton of an army presents itself to our eyes in a naked, starving, condition, out of health, out of spirits. But I have seen Fort George in the summer of 1777. Next campaign I believe we shall banish these troublesome fellows.* For Heaven's sake, my dear friend, exert yourself strenuously in the great leading business of taxation. To that great wheel, "a thousand petty spokes and small annexments are mortised and adjoined." I earnestly entreat you, and my other friend,† *fortia opponere pectora* to that fatal system of limitation, which, if carried into execution, would be downright ruin, and in the ineffectual attempt will carry us to the brink of it. York Town and its neighborhood, although near ninety miles from Philadelphia, already consider our money‡ almost as waste paper.

'My love to Livingston. I shall write to him by this opportunity, if I can find time to send a long letter, which indeed I owe him. Remember me to Mrs Jay, and believe me yours,

'Gouverneur Morris.'

As an introduction to an interesting letter from Mr Morris to his mother, written the day after his arrival in Congress from camp, it is essential to observe, that he had not visited

---

* That is, the British troops in Philadelphia.

† Doubtless Robert R. Livingston.

‡ The paper money issued by the state of New York.

his paternal home, nor seen any of his relatives at Morrisania, since the British had taken possession of New York. His mother's residence was within the enemy's lines, and continued so during the whole war. Under these circumstances, her concern for her only son, who had adopted principles not congenial with her own, as well as his anxiety on her account, may easily be imagined. A large portion of his family connexions, and some of his intimate friends, among whom was his early patron and adviser, William Smith the historian, adhered to the royal cause. The decided part, which he took at the outset of the contest, in the ranks of opposition and of the advocates for liberty, entering a path thickened with perils and darkened with doubts, was looked upon as an act of rashness by many, whom his interest would have prompted him to conciliate, and his affections to indulge, but his patriotism overruled every motive of this sort, and the voice of duty was to him more imperious than the claims of consanguinity, more seductive than the tempting prospects of personal ease and ultimate security. Neither the strong ties of the one, nor the flattering allurements of the other, drew him for a moment from his purpose.

This state of things was a source of a good deal of inconvenience and anxiety, and subjected him to suspicions, which certain persons took care to foster and circulate. Mr Jay wrote to him on one occasion; 'Your enemies talk much of your tory connexions in Philadelphia. Take care. Some people of importance in your city apprehend ill consequences from it to yourself, as well as to the State, and wish you to be more circumspect. They have informed me of this in a friendly manner, that I might hint it to you. Do not unnecessarily expose yourself to calumny, and perhaps indignity.' In referring to the same subject, in a letter to Mr Jay, he observes, 'as to the malevolence of individuals, it is what I have to expect. It is by no means a matter of surprise, that I should be hated by some men. But I will have my revenge. By laboring in the public service, so as to gain the applause of those whose applause is worth gaining, I will punish them

severely.' As his letters to his mother were obliged to be passed through the enemy's hands, it was insinuated that they contained other particulars, than those intended for her, and that the British in New York were profited by his correspondence. So gross a suspicion, mumured against a man, whose zeal and labor, in the cause he had chosen, afforded every day conspicuous proofs of its falsity, was not likely to be listened to by many, whose opinion was worth regarding, yet it was turned to account by the malicious and meddlesome, and whispered abroad to his disadvantage.

An incident occurred, which may be cited as a curious illustration of this fact. In the year 1775, a gentleman who had married his sister, and for whom he had great personal regard, a loyalist in principle, and at that time in London, wrote him a letter containing the following paragraph. 'Your letter gave me inexpressible pleasure, but the accounts I have of you from others give me still more. Every increase of your reputation is a source of heartfelt satisfaction to me. Go on and deserve well of your country. Endeavor to keep peace and good order, and to moderate the madness of the people. The most vigorous preparations are making for carrying on the war. Trade and manufactures are, contrary to the expectations of America, in the most flourishing state. The nation is united, and although their pulse does not beat so high, as if they were waging war against a foreign enemy, yet they are firm and determined. Suffer not yourself to be deceived, by the anecdotes and accounts in the English newspapers. They will lead you into fatal errors. They only exhibit the devices and express the wishes of a few obscure, desperate, and otherwise insignificant people, who have neither the good of this country nor of America at heart, and of consequence are enemies to both.'

The fate of the letter conveying these sentiments was singular. When it arrived in New York it was detained, as being directed to a rebel. Thence it went to Halifax. From Halifax it was returning to New York again on board a large ship, which was stranded on the shore of New Jersey. The mail

drifted to land, where it was found, and thence transported into the interior, to Burlington or Trenton. A delegate in Congress from New Jersey told Mr Morris, that there was a letter for him in this mail, and when Mr Morris desired him to procure it, the delegate expressed doubts, saying he thought he might procure him a sight of it, but could not promise to obtain the letter itself; and this he said with an air of mystery and suspicion, at which Mr Morris felt somewhat indignant, and solicited him no further, nor took any more notice of the affair. Soon afterwards, however, he received it enclosed in another letter from Mr Reed, President of Pennsylvania, to whom it had been sent, and on whose mind, as well as on some others, it had produced an unfavorable influence, although it came to hand more than three years after it was written, and Mr Morris had all that time filled important public stations, among the foremost in principle, spirit, and activity, in resisting the aggressions of Britain, asserting independence, and setting up new forms of government.

That he might avoid every ground of reproach, his letters to his mother, and other relations within the enemy's lines, were unfrequent and short, and confined for the most part to the common-place topics of his health and situation. The one alluded to above, however, is an exception from this character, and bears a strong testimony to the goodness of his heart and the strength of his filial affection, as well as to the sacrifice of feeling, which he had made in separating himself from his friends, and pursuing a course which they did not approve.

'York Town, Pennsylvania, April 17th, 1778.

'Dear Madam,

'I sit down to let you know, that I am in this world, though in a remote part of it. I have heard of you, but not form you, since I left Morrisania; neither have I had the satisfaction to learn, that, of the many letters I have written, you have ever received one. It would give me infinite pleasure to hear of my friends, yourself in particular, but

since it is my lot to know no more than the burthen of general report, I must be contented.

'I received great pain from being informed, that you are distressed on my account. Be of good cheer, I pray you. I have all that happiness, which flows from conscious rectitude. I am blessed with as great a portion of health, as usually belongs to the share of mankind. Content with what I have, and with what I am, I look forward serenely to the course of events, confident that the Fountain of supreme wisdom and virtue will provide for the happiness of his creatures. It gives me pain, that I am separated from those I love, but comparing this with what thousands suffer, I dare not repine. Let me earnestly recommend to you so much of religion, as to bear inevitable evils with resignation. I would that it were in my power to solace and comfort your declining age. The duty I owe to a tender parent demands this of me, but a higher duty has bound me to the service of my fellow creatures. The natural indolence of my disposition has unfitted me for the paths of ambition, and the early possession of power taught me how little it deserves to be prized. Whenever the present storm subsides, I shall rush with eagerness into the bosom of private life, but while it continues, and while my country calls for the exertion of that little share of abilities, which it has pleased God to bestow on me, I hold it my indispensable duty to give myself to her.

'I know that for such sentiments I am called a rebel, and that such sentiments are not fashionable among the folks you see. It is possible, though I hope not, that your maternal tenderness may lead you to wish, that I would resign these sentiments. Let me, however, entreat, that you be not concerned on my account. I shall again see you, perhaps the time is not far off. I am much distressed for ———. I sincerely love him, and I fear that we are separated for a long season. Pray remember me to him most affectionately, and to my sister. She too has been much wounded. The loss of her infant must have greatly distressed her; but perhaps her own experience may have led her to prize life at its just value, and if

so, it is a blessing she may not think so estimable, as to wish it for her child. Remember me most tenderly to all her little infants, to Isaac particularly, who, I am told, has not forgotten me. Poor child, I hope it may be in my power to return his attention by the protection of a parent. God forbid that he should need it, or any of them. Remember me to Mrs Ashfield and her children, for I think she has more than one. I wish her husband had acted more consistently; but enough of this. And now, my dear Madam, let me again entreat you to make yourself happy. Discard the gloomy ideas, which are too apt to crowd into the mind in your situation and time of life. There is enough of sorrow in this world, without looking into futurity for it. Hope the best. If it happens, well; if not, it will then be time enough to be afflicted, and at any rate the intermediate space will be well filled. Adieu. Yours, most affectionately.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

About three years after the date of this letter, his mother being dangerously ill, he formed a design to visit her, and obtained permission for that purpose, through the usual channel, from the British cammander in New York. As soon as this was known, the public journals took it up, and appealed to him not only with the strong language of persuasion, but with some severity of remark. The contemplated visit was censured as improper for a person, who had been in offices of high and responsible trusts, and although his fidelity might not be doubted, yet it was a temptation to which no one ought to expose himself, and an example of pernicious tendency. To go into the enemy's lines, invested with a public character, or charged with a public commission, would give him claims to support the dignity of his station, and maintain in his own person the rights of independence and equality, but to enter there as a private individual, admitted only by the permission or sufferance of the enemy, and for no other than a personal and private object, might expose him to accidents that would be mortifying to himself, and cause regret to his countrymen.

It would, moreover, in any event, redound to his injury after his return, for it would afford a pretence for malicious persons to refer any future political course, which he might pursue, to some supposed connexion with his transactions in New York. These considerations, urged equally by friends and foes, he thought had weight, and he resolved to forego the visit. That his motives might be known to the public, who had chosen to view the matter in so grave an aspect, he published the following statement.

'The address in the Freeman's Journal of this day, compels me to trouble my fellow citizens with a detail of those circumstances, to which it alludes. I hope they will excuse me for calling their attention to the insignificancy of domestic connexions. From the early moments of the present contest, my political sentiments and conduct have been clear and decided. In the year 1776, I left *all* for the sake of those principles, which have justified and supported the revolution. This sacrifice was made without hesitation or regret, but it gave me real concern to leave an aged parent at the mercy of the enemy. It is true, I was for some time honored by my countrymen, much beyond my desert, and beyond my ambition. When our prospects were very gloomy, I was deeply engaged in public business of an intricate nature, and placed in a variety of arduous and critical situations. I have thought much, labored much, suffered much. In return, I have been censured, reproached, slandered; goaded by abuse, blackened by calumny, and oppressed by popular opinion. All this has been borne without complaining, and avenged only by forgiveness. My defence was left to time, and that candor which generally prevails when the gusts of passion have subsided.

'I received many pressing solicitations to visit my mother within the enemy's lines. I declined it. At length a violent disease endangered her life, and I learnt from some of my friends her anxiety to see me, before her eyes were closed forever. I promised to go. Application was made to the

British General, and his passport was obtained. She had by that time in some degree recovered; but still laboring under the pressure of sickness and age, she solicits the performance of my promise. I have applied to the President and Council of Pennsylvania. Their permission has not been obtained. This is my situation. I have not listened to the solicitations of interest, but have yielded to the voice of nature and affection, in the moment of extreme sensibility. These, my countrymen, were the motives of my conduct. I did not think that conduct reprehensible; but since my intentions are disagreeable to you, I shall persist no longer. Having already devoted the better part of my life to your service, I will now sacrifice my feelings to your inclination.'

Not many weeks after his return to Congress from Valley Forge, he drew up a very long paper, exhibiting a detailed account of the actual state of public affairs, and designed for the use of Congress. It is a remarkable evidence of his industry, close observation, and the minute knowledge he had acquired of the proceedings in all the civil and military branches of the government. The first takes up the finances, his favorite theme, and treats largely of the causes of depreciation, and its consequences. He next suggests a remedy, and proposes a method for restoring the value of the money, and procuring solid funds adequate to the public demands. One of his chief expedients is economy in expenditures; and when he comes to the army, as he does afterwards, and exposes the enormous abuses in that department, with which his enquiries had made him acquainted, arising from a bad system, mismanagement, waste, perquisites, and frauds in purchases and issues, it is not surprising, that he should place this item in the foremost list. He sketches out a plan of reform, by which the money concerns of the army should be kept under a more rigid inspection, and entrusted to more responsible hands.

Great evils he conceives to have grown out of the loose manner, in which the national expenditures generally had been made, and the little absolute knowledge that Congress, by its

present mode of doing business, could possibly have of this subject. He recommends a treasury board in due form, with its apparatus of treasurer, auditors, comptroller, and clerks, shows in what manner its machinery should move, and contends that nothing short of such a system, carried thoroughly into effect, would secure the funds of the nation from the endless waste, peculation, and fraud of the multiplied agents, whose hands they must necessarily pass through. He proposes, also, a navy board, and a board of commerce; and above all, he insists on the necessity of an *Executive Committee*, whose office it should be to see that the resolves and plans of Congress were carried into execution, receive reports from the several boards, memorials from other bodies, and put all business of this sort into a proper form to come before the House. He enters still more largely into the affairs of the army, speaks of each department separately, enumerates its defects, in some cases its outrageous abuses, and presents a scheme of changes and reforms on a systematic scale throughout the whole.

How far this paper had an influence on Congress cannot now be known, but it is an able performance, marking not more the laborious industry of the author, than his public spirit, the wide compass of his views, and the justness of his conceptions.

The zeal with which he devoted himself to the improvement of the medical department of the army, and the reliance placed on his activity and influence, may be inferred from the following extract of a letter, written by Dr Shippen, at that time Director General of the Hospitals of all the American Armies, dated at Moor Hall, June 17th, 1778.

'I am importuned by all the sons of Æsculapius to apply to you on their behalf, and entreat you to finish the new arrangement of the medical department, and to put them on the establishment. Much good will arise to the public, and much expense be saved, by making only one system, and that in the manner you have before you. A great many useless and ig-

norant officers will be discharged, men of science will be enlisted, and no more be employed than are necessary. Many offer now for places. I put them all off, till the examination, which should be held immediately. Any particular duties of the subordinate officers must be pointed out by the medical triumviate, as necessity requires. Dr Jones is now at Trenton, and I hear will be in camp in a few days.

'I expect in a day or two to send you my general return. I have been very busy here these ten days in removing the sick from the army, and instituting new hospitals in its rear. Cochran, Hutchinson, and others, conjure you, as their patron and protector, to use your great influence in our behalf.'

CHAPTER X.

MR MORRIS'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH GENERAL WASHINGTON.—CONWAY'S INTRIGUES.—GENERAL LAFAYETTE.—FOREIGN OFFICERS IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES.—PETITION OF THE AMERICAN OFFICERS.—GENERAL GREENE.

A correspondence commenced between Mr Morris and General Washington on public affairs, which continued with little interruption while the former was in Congress. And here let me add, that the friendship between these two patriots, which had its beginning at the time of their first interview at Newark, as heretofore related, on the day previous to General Washington's entry into New York, in his way to take the command of the army at Cambridge, became more strongly cemented by time, was never diminished, and ceased only with death. While the war lasted, Mr Morris adhered firmly to the interests of the commander in chief, discountenanced the plots set on foot against him by the ambitious, the envious, and factious in the army, and more than approved by a few wayward spirits in Congress, and on all occasions he was not a more zealous

defender of the liberty and rights of his country, than of the purity, ability, and exalted character of the chief, in whose hands its destinies were mainly placed. Washington did not undervalue nor forget these early proofs of regard; he returned them with warmth and sincerity at that time, and continued them with unabated confidence to the end of his life.

Mr Morris's first letter to General Washington was dated at York Town, April 18th, 1778.

'Dear Sir,

'I expected before this time to have written to you, that provision is made for the American officers, but that thief of time, procrastination, has kept it off from time to time. The question is now the order of the day, and, as such, takes place of every other business. When it will be determined, I know not, but this I know, that it shall be finished one way or the other before anything else, let what will happen. I am confident it will go right, if something very extraordinary does not occur. In the interim nothing is done. I feel as severely on this occasion as you can do. All will yet go well.

'We have determined to send Gates to Hudson River, where he is to command very largely. But he is to receive instructions, which shall be proper. You are directed to call a council of *major* generals, in which the chief engineer is *officially* to be a member, and to which, by a subsequent resolution, Generals Gates and Mifflin were *ordered* to repair. As these gentlemen ought not to receive orders *immediately* from Congress, they are, as you will see, permitted to leave the board of war upon *your* order. This *amendment* was therefore acquiesced in unanimously.* Colonel Harrison will,

* There is an allusion here to the differences, which existed between General Washington and General Gates, springing out of Conway's affair. Mr Morris desired Washington to understand, that, by this mode of appointing a council of war, and putting Gates and Mifflin under his *order*, by an open vote, Congress had expressed decidedly

I believe, be again appointed a member of the Board of War. This I mention by the bye. I add my wish, that your business and your inclinations may be so ordered, as to allow him to accept of it. For this I have many reasons. Every man of business knows, that words are of great weight, and we receive reports from the Board of War every day. I need say no more, except that it is not always possible to weigh sentences with that accuracy in a public assembly, which is practicable in the closet.* It is astonishing that Congress, who certainly are not without sufficient *apprehension*, should at so critical a moment as the present be so supine, but this is human nature, and we must bear it. I have a remedy in contemplation. If you were an unconcerned spectator, it would divert you to see, that although a majority of our House have been agreed in a certain point, ever since Mr Dana arrived here, yet nothing is done.

'Apropos, of your council of war. Should you determine on anything, which, considering the course of human affairs, is, I confess, rather improbable, let Congress know nothing about it. A secret should never be trusted to many bosoms. I will forfeit anything, except reputation, that it will not be well kept, even by those necessarily confided in. I am, &c.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

In replying to this letter, Washington observes, 'you say, *all will yet be well.* I wish it heartily, but I am much mistaken if there are not some secret and retrograde springs in mo-

---

their views of the merits of the case, and their determination to sustain him against the intrigues and cabals of his enemies. Gates was now at the head of the Board of War, and sending him to the station on Hudson River, where he would be under the immediate command of Washington, was also another indication of the general sentiments of Congress on this subject.

*Colonel Harrison was Washington's secretary, a gentleman of ability, intelligence, and of great readiness in transacting affairs.

tion to prevent it.' His next letter is an answer to one of Mr Morris's that has been lost.

'Valley Forge, May 18th, 1778.

'My Dear Sir,

'As the council held at this place was by order of Congress, and the members constituting it were pointed out by them, it was determined, out of respect to that body, to treat the new members with civility. Indeed the wish of all here, that no private differences should interrupt that harmony, which is so essential in public councils, had no small share in the amity that appeared. Contrary, I own, to *my* expectation, the same sentiments, respecting the measures to be pursued, pervaded the whole. Our resolutions of consequence were unanimous.

'I was not a little surprised to find a gentleman, who, sometime ago, when a cloud of darkness hung heavy over us, and our affairs looked gloomy, was desirous of resigning, to be now stepping forward in the line of the army. But, if *he* can reconcile such conduct to his feelings, as an *officer* and man of *honor*, and Congress have no objections to his leaving his seat in another department, I have nothing *personally* to oppose to it. Yet I must think, that gentlemen stepping in and out, as the sun happens to beam forth or be obscured, is not *quite* the thing, nor *quite* just with respect to those officers, who take the bitter with the sweet.

'I am told that Conway, from whom I have received another impertinent letter, dated the 23d ultimo, *demanding* the command of a division of the continental army, is, through the medium of his friends, soliciting his commission again. Can this be? And if so, will it be granted? I am very sincerely and affectionately,

'George Washington.'

MR MORRIS'S REPLY.

'York Town, May 21st, 1778.

'Dear General,

'We are going on with the regimental arrangements as fast as possible, and I think the day begins to appear with respect to that business. Had our Saviour addressed a chapter to the rulers of mankind, as he did many to the subjects, I am persuaded his good sense would have dictated this text; *Be not wise overmuch.* Had the several members, who compose our multifarious body, been only wise enough, our business would long since have been completed. But our superior abilities, or the desire of appearing to possess them, lead us to such exquisite tediousness of debate, that the most precious moments pass unheeded away like vulgar things.

'As to what you mention of the extraordinary demeanor of some gentlemen, I cannot but agree with you, that such conduct is not the most *honorable.* But, on the other hand, you must allow that it is the most *safe*, and certainly you are not to learn, that, however ignorant of that happy art in your own person, the bulk of us bipeds know well how to balance solid pudding against empty praise. There are other things, my dear Sir, besides virtue, which are their own *reward.* And the feelings of others will, unless I mistake, sooner or later break out into a retribution of those acts and neglects, which at present pass away unnoticed by the herd of observers, or rather lookers on.

'As to your friend, who has thought proper to *demand* of you a command, I did believe from the first, that his resignation was, like some former ones from the same quarter, merely calculated to gain either promotion, or favor, or revenge. I was therefore led to expect, that his merits and our misfortune in losing him would become the topic of declamation, and took the earliest opportunity to express in the very strongest terms my satisfaction, my joy, at the receipt of the letter from him, and of consequence to assign the reasons

why this event gave me so much pleasure. This gave a very different turn to affairs. Panegyric dwindled to apology, and no opposition was made to the main point of accepting his resignation. The next day I was informed, that he did not intend to resign, that his letter was quite misunderstood, &c. The gentleman, however, had been so unlucky, as to use the most pointed terms, and therefore his aid, from whom the information came, was told that the observations he made came too late. I am persuaded, that he will attempt to get reinstated, if the least probability of success appears, but I am equally persuaded, that his attempts will fail. I believe his friends are hitherto of the same opinion, and therefore we have as yet had no attempts made in Congress, and possibly we never shall. I am, &c,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

The issue proved in some degree different from Mr Morris's expectations. Other attempts were made, and strenuously urged by Conway's friends, to induce Congress to restore the commission, which he had proffered in a freak of ill humor, and which was by a large number, at least, joyfully accepted. Conway, it seems, was much chagrined to find himself taken at his word, having too high an opinion of his importance in the army, to dream for a moment, that his services could be dispensed with; and his success in gaining an appointment from Congress, after the hostile disposition he had shown towards Washington, doubtless contributed to encourage his extravagant self estimation and demands.

It was in October, shortly after the affair at Germantown, that Conway began to intrigue against the commander in chief, and in the January following he was sent to Albany, as an officer in the wild expedition to Canada, planned by General Gates, and at the head of which he contrived to place the Marquis de Lafayette, much to the subsequent regret and mortification of that gallant general. The expedition failed, or rather it never existed, except in name, and Conway staid

in Albany till the middle of May, having in the mean time made a show of resigning his commission, and received the unwelcome intelligence, that he was taken in earnest, and relieved from the burden of his official responsibilities. Then it was, as Mr Morris says, that there came apologies, and explanations, and complaints of being misunderstood, but all without avail. Conway at length resolved to go in person to Congress, not doubting that he should be able on the spot to soften the obdurate hearts or subdue the sturdy resolution of his opponents. The result will be seen in the following letter to his friend Gates, who was then at his head-quarters in Fishkill, on the North River, and whom Conway had visited on his way from Albany.

'York Town, June 7th 1778.

Dear General,

'I never had a sufficient idea of cabals until I reached this place. My reception, you may imagine, was not a warm one. I must except Mr Samuel Adams, Colonel Richard Henry Lee, and a few others, who are attached to you, but who cannot oppose the torrent. Before my arrival General Mifflin had joined General Washington's army, where he commands a division. One Mr Carroll from Maryland, upon whose friendship I depended, is one of the hottest of the cabal. He told me a few days ago almost literally, that anybody, who displeased or did not admire the commander in chief, ought not to be kept in the army. Mr Carroll may be a good papist, but I am sure the sentiments he expresses are neither Roman nor Catholic. I expect to depart from this court in a very few days. If there is any attempt from the enemy upon your post, I will ask your leave to serve in the quality of a volunteer. I am with true esteem, &c.

'Thomas Conway.'

This was the end of General Conway's military career in the United States. He had no opportunity to join his friend, as a volunteer in active service. A few months afterwards he

sailed for France, a melancholy example, in his disappointments and regrets, of the just retribution which awaits presumptuous vanity, secret intrigues, and uncurbed ambition.

MR MORRIS TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

'In Congress, May 27th, 1778.

'Dear General

'I have a word to say to you on the subject of promotion, which we have just now finished, or rather unfinished, at least if that matter was before in an unfinished situation. That famous incomprehensible Baltimore resolution, introduced, unluckily perhaps, a very tedious debate, which terminated at lenght by rejecting the whole of what the committee reported, with relation to the promoting of officers. You may be a little surprised, when I tell you, that upon the whole matter I believe this is best. But how? It is true, I confess, that much ground of heart-burning is left, under the Baltimore resolution governing these matters by the mysterious trinity of *seniority*, *merit*, and *quota*.

'Let me, however, on the other hand observe, that to tie up the hands of the republic as to the officers, whom they are to appoint, is utterly inconsistent with the republican principles of government, which ought to prevail among us. No danger, it is true, can arise at present; but, my dear Sir, we are laying foundations, and how posterity in future wars may build on the foundations laid by ancestors, whom they will certainly reverence, no man can be hardy enough to assert. What then, you will say, is the effect of the new rule? In my poor opinion it is no rule. What then is the use of the resolution? Nothing more, than an apology for officers, whom it may be found necessary to supersede.

'Congress, in effect, seem to have pledged themselves to their constitutents, that they will pay a due attention in the quota of troops furnished by the States respectively to the seniority of the several officers, and to that degree of military abilities, which nature or industry may have conferred upon deserving individuals. You ask me what is to be the rule of promotion below the degree of a general officer. I answer, that

Congress could not with propriety make any rule. They have given to the States the power of appointing the officers in their own regiments; consequently it would be idle to restrict them, as to the persons whom they shall appoint. It will, therefore, be necessary to make application to the several States on the occasion. They have already, I believe, in most instances given you the necessary power, and if so, then to fix the order of promotion will only be a limitation of such power. I am, dear General, most sincerely yours,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

The following letter will perhaps sufficiently explain itself, and yet it may be thought somewhat harsh, in reference to the foreign officers, who came to this country for the apparently generous purpose of fighting against its enemies. But the truth is, that both Congress and the commander in chief were extremely annoyed and embarrassed with persons of this sort, many of whom had very slender claims to notice, either on account of their military rank at home, or their general character. Washington was the chief sufferer, for when, by their own forwardness or by the importunity of friends, they had gained admission into the service through the channel of Congress, they were turned over to him to be provided with stations in the army, suitable to their newly acquired rank. This could rarely be done, except at the expense of native officers; and when done, the new incumbents were frequently found to be more distinguished, by their absurd pretensions and overweening conceit than by any solid qualifications for the posts they filled. Here was then a double evil, the discontent of American officers, whose promotion was thus interfered with, and the incapacity and troublesome demands of their substitutes.

It is no wonder, that, with such a system of operations, Washington's patience should at length have become exhausted. The subject was not one, which he could bring publicly before Congress. Delicacy forbad such a step, for among the foreign officers were a few, whose character and designs made

them honorable exceptions to the general rule, and whose feelings were to be regarded. His only chance of remedy was, therefore, to express himself freely to his confidential friends in Congress, and endeavor through them to effect a change in the principles adopted by that assembly, in their appointment of foreigners to military rank.

GENERAL WASHINGTON TO MR MORRIS.

'White Plains, July 24th, 1778.

'Dear Sir,

'Whether you are indebted to me, or I to you, for a letter, I know not, nor is it a matter of much moment. The design of this is to touch, cursorily, upon a subject of very great importance to the well-being of these States; much more so than will appear at first view. I mean the appointment of so many foreigners to offices of high rank and trust in our service.

'The lavish manner, in which rank has hitherto been bestowed on these gentlemen, will certainly be productive of one or the other of these two evils, either to make it despicable in the eyes of Europe, or become a means of pouring them in upon you like a torrent, and adding to your present burden. But it is neither the expense nor trouble of them that I most dread. There is an evil more extensive in its nature, and fatal in its consequences, to be apprehended, and that is, the driving of all your own officers out of the service, and throwing not only your army, but your military councils, entirely into the hands of foreigners.

'The officers, my dear Sir, on whom you must depend for the defence of this cause, and who, from length of service, their connexions, property, and, in behalf of many, I may add, military merit, will not submit much if any longer to the unnatural promotion of men over them, who have nothing more than a little plausibility, unbounded pride and ambition, and a perseverance in application not to be resisted but by uncommon firmness, to support their pretensions; men, who, in the first instance, tell you they wish for nothing more than the honor of serving in so glorious a cause as volunteers, the next day

solicit rank without pay, the day following want money advanced to them, and in the course of a week want further promotion, and are not satisfied with anything you can do for them.

'When I speak of officers not submitting to these appointments, let me be understood to mean, that they have no more doubt of their right to resign, when they think themselves aggrieved, than they have of a power in Congress to appoint. Both being granted, then, the expediency and the policy of the measure remain to be considered, and whether it is consistent with justice or prudence to promote these military fortune-hunters, at the hazard of your army. They may be divided into three classes, viz. mere adventurers without recommendation, or recommended by persons, who do not know how else to dispose of or provide for them; men of great ambition, who would sacrifice everything to promote their own personal glory; or mere spies, who are sent here to obtain a thorough knowledge of our situation and circumstances, in the execution of which, I am persuaded, some of them are faithful emissaries, as I do not believe a single matter escapes unnoticed, or unadvised at a foreign court.

'I could say a great deal on this subject, but will add no more at present. I am led to give you this trouble at this time, by a *very handsome* certificate showed me yesterday in favor of M. Neuville, written (I believe) by himself, and subscribed by General Parsons, designed, as I am informed, for a foundation of the superstructure of a brigadiership.

'Baron Steuben, I now find, is also wanting to quit his inspectorship for a command in the line. This will be productive of much discontent to the brigadiers. In a word, although I think the Baron an excellent officer, I do most devoutly wish, that we had not a single foreigner among us, except the Marquis de Lafayette, who acts upon very different principles from those which govern the rest. Adieu. I am most sincerely yours,

'GEORGE WASHINGTON.'

MR MORRIS TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

'Philadelphia, August 2d, 1778.

'Dear General,

'I was in your debt. It is my fate always to be so with my friends. But, believe me, my heart owes nothing. Let me add, that you can do me no favor so great, as to comply with your wishes, except an opportunity to serve the public, which indeed is your highest wish, as you have evinced fully to all the world, and particularly to your friends.

'I feel the full force of your reasoning. The faith of Congress is in some measure plighted to M. de la Neuville, but it is not their interest that his brevet shall give command. I will take care to get this expressed by a particular resolution. The Baron has a claim, from his merit, to be noticed, but I never will consent to grant what I am told he requests, and I think Congress will not. At least they will not if I can help it.

'I this instant was informed of the opportunity of an express for camp, which goes immediately. Let me, however, congratulate you on the affair at Monmouth, on the *whole* affair. It might have been better, it is said. I think not, for you have, even from your enemies, the honor of that day. You have enemies. It is happy for you that you have. A man of sentiment has not so much honor, as the vulgar suppose, in resigning life and fortune for the service of his country. He does not value them as highly as the vulgar do. Would he give the highest evidence, let him sacrifice his feelings. In the history of last winter, posterity will do you justice. Adieu, believe me sincerely yours,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

'Philadelphia, October 26th, 1778.

'Dear General,

'The conduct, which the enemy may pursue, with relation to us, is not quite decided. But I have not a doubt, that their

efforts during the next campaign will be chiefly towards our frontiers, with a view to weary us into submission. At the same time they will perhaps endeavor to keep such posts in our country, as to render the communications tedious, difficult, and expensive. My ideas as to our power of carrying on the war differ in some respects from those, whose opinions I respect. The resources of the country may be drawn forth by our paper, at the same time it must be confessed, that this paper will thereby be less valuable. After all, the debt does not increase, for a certain sterling sum, which would have paid it one year ago, will pay it now. The depreciation in the interim has operated as a tax.

'I very sincerely lament, that this tax has fallen heavy on those, who have served and continue to serve their country. It is a peculiar hardship upon us, that fully to relieve the evils they labor under is not in our power. This leads me to the petition you mention, or representation, which I have not yet seen, and never wish to see.* I cannot easily express to you how much I was hurt at being informed of it. Not indeed as to the matter, for that I really am a stranger to, but as to the

---

* A letter, which he had received from Washington a few days before, contained the following passage.

'The high prices of every necessary; the little, indeed, no benefit which officers have derived from the intended bounty of Congress in the article of clothing; the change in the establishment, by which so many of them are discontinued; the unfortunate delay of this business, which kept them too long in suspence, and set a number of evil spirits at work; the unsettled rank and contradictory modes of adjusting it; these, with other causes which might be enumerated, have conspired to sour the temper of the army exceedingly. They have, I am told, been productive of a Memorial, or representation of some kind, to Congress, which neither directly nor indirectly did I know, or even hear, was in agitation, till some days after it was despatched. This was owing, as I apprehend, to the secrecy with which it was conducted, in order to keep it from my knowledge, as I had in a similar instance last Spring discountenanced and stifled a project of this sort in its birth.'

manner in which it was procured. For, in the first place, it gave my enemies, (who were such in some degree for my earnest support of the claims of the army heretofore,) no small cause of triumph. 'This, say they, is the consequence of your zeal for an establishment. Besides this, I considered myself in some measure as an advocate for the army. I loved them, from my acquaintance with some individuals, and for the sufferings which as a body they had bravely and patiently endured; and, therefore, I could not but suffer when I found them taking steps, which in my opinion cannot do them honor, and which incapacitated me from urging, as I otherwise should have done, every redress in our power of their grievances.

'But what chiefly affected me was, that this meeting of delegates from brigades, in a mixture of civil and military capacity, carries with it the air of deeper design, than I believe to be in the bosoms of those, who were immediately concerned. It was by procedures such as these, that the good Fairfax made way for a crafty Cromwell, and that he dismissed a tedious wrangling Parliament, and established a military despotism. It is a melancholy truth, that when one faction takes possession of the human heart, men are hurried into extremes, which make considerate people tremble. I will not do your army the injustice even to permit a thought, that they wish to get rid of their General. But, Sir, their, and your, and our enemies, do not want the confidence to say so, and indeed to say that they can prove it, and to attempt that proof from the manner of procuring (*agitating* as they term it) the petition in question. Certainly could such ideas be inculcated, it would answer their views. It would also answer their views to instil into the army a distrust of Congress, and therefore I doubt not but the enemies of both are assiduous in this business. I find also the British commissioners are so barefaced, as to hold out the bait of promotion in the royal army to such, as will fall in with their designs, and doubtless a peculiar portion of their bounty will be dispensed to those, who shall sow the seeds of dissensions in an army, which, as they cannot conquer it, it is their only resource to divide.

'Thinking on this subject as I do, it did and does appear to me my duty, as a good citizen, thoroughly to discountenance every measure of this kind, particularly when it is ushered forth, as the first mention of this affair was to me, by an observation that the army had it in their power to do themselves justice. It makes me unhappy to learn, that such discourse prevails I am certain that they who use it have no design; but they should consider that it affords matter for the designs of others to work upon. It has not made any serious impression, I believe, on the minds of those, whose opinions have real weight, because it is considered as one of those light expressions, which flow from the luxuriance of the imagination. Little do those, who say such things, know the difficulties of subsisting an army.

'The Marquis will hand you a *plan*, on which I shall say nothing, because I have already had a great deal of trouble with it, and he could say more than I can write in a week, and you know more of the subject than all of us together.

'We have no news. Let me then tell you what has the merit of truth, if not the charms of novelty, that I am, dear General, very sincerely yours,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

'P. S. General Lee's affair hangs by the eyelids. We spent one day upon it without even touching upon its merits. The debate was, in what manner to proceed to a decision. Some contended for the propriety of resolving simply to approve or disapprove of the sentence. Others were for entering into the considerations of the charges, and the evidence on them separately, without however making any entry on the minutes. A third for doing this, and making the entries. This, as the most systematic method, I supported, for truly I know not how to determine in the lump. Granting him guilty of all the charges, it is too light a punishment. And if he is not guilty, in the opinion of Congress, of any one, there would be an injustice in not declaring their opinion.

'Conway has again applied for a certificate of his good ser-

vices, and I have again opposed the grant of it. This letter lies on the table. Again, my friend, adieu.'*

He wrote to Washington on the 26th of April, 1779. 'You must permit me most heartily to congratulate you upon the very important intelligence, which Monsieur Gerard will confidentially communicate to you. It is, and indeed ought to be, a secret even from Congress, for which I need give you no reasons, as you are but too well acquainted with them. Measures have already been taken for obtaining the necessary supplies, which the Minister will detail to you. These you will undoubtedly assist, as far as may fall within your line.' This intelligence related to the intended return of Count d'Estaing, with the French squadron from the West Indies, and had been secretly communicated to M. Gerard, the French Minister in the United States. M. Gerard visited

* In a letter from Conway to his friend General Gates, dated at Philadelphia on the twenty-eighth of October, he writes as follows.

'I waited with impatience for a safe opportunity of conveying a letter to you. I communicated the one written to me by my honest friend, Colonel Troup, to several worthy people here, who discovered a just indignation at the ungenerous attempt made upon the favor of this country. This affair, in reflecting honor upon you, has covered with shame the authors of the infamous plot.

'I am now in perfect health. I shall take the first opportunity of returning to France, and expect to sail towards the latter end of next month, or the beginning of December. Congress makes some difficulty in granting me such a certificate, as I have never seen refused to a private soldier when discharged. This difficulty, by what I hear from some members, is owing to the dread of disobliging a certain person.

'I will take it as a particular favor, if you are so kind as to transmit to me, by a safe hand, the copy of the letter you have written to General Washington from York Town, in January last, concerning the paragraph imputed to me. I should be happy to receive it as soon as possible.'

The '*certain person*,' mentioned above, was of course General Washington. What he means by the '*infamous plot*' must be left to the conjecture, or better knowledge of the reader.

Washington's camp to consult with him, as to the best mode of co-operation between Count d'Estaing and the American forces.

Two plans were proposed. The first, to make a combined attack upon the enemy in New York; or, secondly, for Count d'Estaing to act in conjunction with the American troops in Georgia. Washington agreed to unite in executing the first plan, provided the French Minister would give him positive assurances, that the French naval force in America would be superior to that of the British, otherwise he considered an attack upon New York unadvisable. The Minister could not give such assurances, and the project was abandoned. The second plan was pursued, and accordingly Count d'Estaing brought his fleet to act in concert with General Lincoln in Georgia.

While in the camp at Valley Forge, Mr Morris contracted an intimacy with General Greene, which was matured into a warm and enduring friendship. At this critical juncture of public affairs, the views of these two ardent patriots were in unison upon the topics of general interest, particularly in regard to the arrangements of the army, and the necessity of some speedy and efficient plan for bringing into action, on a larger scale, the military energies of the nation. The lofty, and generous, and disinterested spirit of Greene found in Morris sentiments as elevated, motives as pure, and designs as resolute and unbiassed, as those which he was conscious animated his own breast. They were also bound together by another tie, their devoted regard for the commander in chief, whose enemies at this time were beginning to assume a bolder attitude. Already the bane of their influence was seen to tinge some of the open resolves of Congress, and the effects of their secret machinations, and dark intrigues, were producing the ominous fruit of discord and divided counsels among the civil rulers of the nation. Under these circumstances it was the more natural, that the friends of order, the true lovers of justice and of their country's cause, should be drawn closely together by the

strong bonds of mutual attachment and a common purpose.

During the last campaign, the quartermaster general's department, either by mismanagement, or neglect, or a vicious system, had run into strange confusion, and caused much disorder in the army, and suffering to the soldiers, for the want of timely aid and sufficient supplies of every kind. The voice of the whole army cried out for a reform. This subject came under the notice of the committee from Congress, and a plan was set on foot for new modeling the department. The important question then was, who should be placed at its head. The post was so arduous, the business so complicated, the pecuniary responsibility so great, that none but an officer of the first rank, of commanding talents, untiring industry, and tried integrity, was adequate to the trust. Washington fixed his mind upon Greene, who, after much persuasion, was induced, though reluctantly, to accept the appointment. Friendship for the commander in chief, and a deep sense of the deplorable condition of the army, were the only motives that could prevail upon him to assume a charge, which he foresaw would bring him into many difficulties, and expose him to the clamorous obloquy and unmerited reproach of enmity and ignorance. As a member of the committee for arranging the quartermaster's department, Mr Morris became his correspondent, and both by his influence in Congress, and by his private counsels, aided and sustained the efforts of his friend. The subjoined letter from General Greene to him is dated at Valley Forge, June 1st, 1778.

'I received your favor of the fifth of May, upon the subject of the quartermaster's department, and intend to follow your advice, in order to my own justification, and to silence the faction. I have represented the substance of what I wrote you, (only more fully,) in a letter to the General, requesting his advice and direction, which he has given much in the same terms as you did. But I am frightened at the expense. I have drawn on the treasury already for upwards

of four millions of dollars, and it seems to be but a breakfast for the department, and hardly that. The land carriage is so extensive and costly, the wants of the army so numerous, and everything selling at such enormous prices, that our disbursements will be very great. I dare say they will far exceed your expectation.

'I have written to Congress for their sense and direction, upon several matters respecting the department. I beg you will endeavor to bring the matter to issue as soon as possible, as I am much at a loss to know how to proceed.

'The enemy appear from every piece of intelligence to be making all necessary preparation to evacuate Philadelphia. I should be glad of your opinion respecting their future operations. Some of the officers think they are going to the West Indies; others are of opinion that they are going up the North River. There is one objection to this scheme. There is not a sufficient force to co-operate with Sir Henry from Canada. I should think, that if Great Britain meant to be serious in her propositions for a reconciliation with America, her forces would be collected together at some secure place, and there wait to see the issue of the Commissioners' negotiations.

'Sir Henry Clinton sent out a letter to his Excellency a few days ago, respecting certain acts of Parliament lately passed in favor of America, as he terms it. This letter I suppose has been before Congress before this time.

'General Mc Dougall is not well pleased at the manner of his being superseded in the command on the North River. He thinks the public will form some unfavorable sentiments respecting it. General Gates will not meet with the most cordial reception there. However, he will undoubtedly be treated politely. Governor Clinton showed me several letters, respecting the operations of last campaign, which will do him much credit in history.

'Pray how came General Mifflin to be ordered to join this army? This is a phenomenon in politics. General Conway is at last caught in his own trap, and I am most heartily glad of

it. I wish every such intriguing spirit may meet with the like disappointment in his ambitious designs. He is a most worthless officer as ever served in our army.

'I suppose you go on pretty much in the old style, puzzling one another with doubts and difficulties; each striving to display the greatest wisdom and ingenuity. What progress have you made in the establishment of the army? The half pay you have fixed at seven years. Most of the officers are discontented with it, and I am sorry for it.'

CHAPTER XI.

LORD NORTH'S CONCILIATORY PROPOSITIONS.—PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS ON THAT SUBJECT.—BRITISH COMMISSIONERS.—MR MORRIS TAKES A LEADING PART IN THE TRANSACTIONS RESPECTING THEM.—PREPARES THE INSTRUCTIONS TO DR FRANKLIN.—INTERVIEW AND CONVERSATION WITH THE FRENCH MINISTER.—WESTERN BOUNDARIES.—FINANCES OF AMERICA.—CANADA EXPEDITION.—WASHINGTON'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT CAMPAIGN.

The most essential service rendered by Mr Morris, during his career in Congress, was the part he took in the intercourse with the British Commissioners, who had been sent over with what were called Lord North's conciliatory propositions, or bills. After the disastrous failure of the Canada expedition under Burgoyne, the fruitless adventure of Sir Henry Clinton up the North River, and the empty victories of Howe in Pennsylvania, the British ministry began to have misgivings, as to the ultimate success of their armies in America. The third year of the war had terminated, without any visible progress in the road of conquest, and, so far from subduing the rebellious spirit, or diminishing the military resources of the Americans, their antipathies were daily gaining vigor from fresh resentments, the offspring of renewed provocation, and their power of resistance was growing more consolidated and formi-

dable, from the experience of their officers and soldiers in the habitudes of war, the gradual institutions of civil government, and the universal obedience rendered by the people to the resolves and recommendations of Congress. Add to this discouraging aspect of affairs in America, the symptoms that could be no longer mistaken in France, of an approaching alliance between that country and the revolted colonies, and it will not appear strange, that the eyes of the ministers should be opened, and that they should begin to think of some new plan of operation.

They clearly foresaw that the high tone, which pride on the one hand, and the popular feeling on the other, had hitherto induced them to assume, could not be sustained, nor the promises they had held out to the nation be realized. Prudence for once gained admittance into their councils, and spoke to them in the voice of wisdom, feebly it is true, but yet so loud as to be heard and listened to. From that moment they began to talk of concession and conciliation, and made all haste to bring before Parliament the drafts of two bills, one giving up the point of taxation, which had been the old root of bitterness, if not the sole cause of contention, and the other enabling the King to appoint and send out Commissioners to treat with the Americans, on all the questions in dispute. So eager were the Ministers to anticipate any connexions, which might be in progress with France, that they despatched these bills as soon as they were reported, and before they had been acted on by Parliament. They reached New York, were immediately printed there, and circulated in the country, as widely as could be done by the agency of the British. Copies were sent to Washington at Valley Forge, which were transmitted by him to Congress with severe animadversions upon their character, and the means taken to spread them abroad. These bills were read in Congress as soon as they arrived, and then referred to a committee, of which Morris was chairman. His associates were Drayton and Dana.

On the 22d of April, two days after the bills arrived, the committee made a report, which was drawn up by Morris, and unanimously adopted by Congress. So far from a conciliatory purpose and tendency, the committee found in the bills only an insidious design to operate on the hopes and fears of the people, and to create among them divisions and disaffection to the common cause; and, after enumerating sundry objectionable particulars, they declared it as their opinion, that the United States could not with propriety treat with any Commissioners sent on the part of Great Britain, with whatever powers invested, unless, as a preliminary, the British fleets and armies should be withdrawn, and the independence of the United States acknowledged in express and positive terms. The report concluded with a recommendation to the several States, to make strenuous exertions in getting together, as speedily as possible, their respective quotas of troops for the approaching campaign, and have their militia in readiness for any exigency.*

Just ten days after Congress had passed their decision on these bills, a messenger arrived at York Town, bearing copies of the treaties with France, by which that nation had become an ally to the United States in the war. This intelligence diffused universal joy; and it was a reflection, which contributed not a little to elevate the self respect of the people, that Congress had taken so decided a stand in rejecting the advances of England, before they had any knowledge of this new alliance. The treaties were ratified, and a committee appointed to bring forward an address to the people of America, on this occasion of a new and most propitious crisis in their affairs.

This task again devolved on Mr Morris.† The perform-

---

* Mr Jay wrote to his friend on the 20th of May, as follows.

'The report of Congress on the subject of Lord North's Bills was too strikingly marked with Morris, not to be known by his friends to have been produced by his pen.'

† The committee chosen for the purpose were R. H. Lee, Chase, and Morris. The author of the '*Life of R. H. Lee*' believes him to have been the writer of the ADDRESS, but the first draft is among Mr

ance is somewhat florid and rhetorical in its style, but admirably suited to the object in view, that of awakening the attention of the people, and impressing strongly upon them a just understanding of their actual condition and prospects. A picture is drawn of the troubles, difficulties, and sufferings, which they had gone through, the patience with which they had endured them, their constancy in adhering to their first determinations, and the resolute perseverance and chivalrous courage, with which they had foiled the schemes and met the force of their adversaries. And, that the picture might lose nothing for the want of due contrasts, the motives, aims, and conduct of the enemy are exhibited in a relief, and with a coloring, that could not fail to have an imposing effect on the least practised observers, and minds the least prone to excitement. The success thus far in sustaining the contest is put forth as an earnest of the future, a source of renewed hope, and a motive of cheerful effort and unwavering confidence. Nothing was wanting, but that the people should be true to themselves and faithful to their early pledges.

Considering these preliminary movements, it was not likely that the British Commissioners would find Congress in a humor to treat with them, or to receive with much show of complaisance their advances. It happened unluckily, moreover, that in the first letter they wrote to Congress, after their arrival in New York, enclosing the conciliatory bills as approved by Parliament, they ventured reflections on the conduct of France in joining the United States, which proved extremely offensive to the assembled representatives of her new ally. So much were they exasperated when this part of the letter was read, that the reading was suspended by a vote,

---

Morris's papers, in his own handwriting. In one of Mr Jays' letters to Mr Morris, he says; 'The *Address* of Congress is much liked, and has its use. I have not yet met with a single whig in this State (New York) willing to accept peace on Lord North's terms.' Mr Jay apparently did not know who was the author of the Address when he wrote.

and some time elapsed before it was again called up and considered.*

The reply to the letter by the President of Congress was much in the tone of the report noticed above, seasoned with the declaration, that nothing but the desire of saving the further effusion of blood could have prevailed upon them to read a paper, treating with so much disrespect his most Christian Majesty, and containing propositions so derogatory to the honor of an independent nation; professing at the same time a

---

* The following is part of a letter from Robert Morris to Gouverneur Morris, dated Valley Forge, June 16th, 1778.

'I came down here about ten days ago, expecting to go into Philadelphia immediately, and should certainly have done so, had not the Commissioners arrived at the critical time they did. Since then I have been prevailed on to stay, day after day, until Congress give them their answer, which, it is expected here, will be such, as will send them off immediately. After that answer is given, I should like to hold an hour or two's conversation with my friend, Governor Johnstone, but have not yet determined on doing so. I think he will be much mortified at his disappointed embassy, and I could wish to convince him, that Great Britain may still be happy and continue rich, by forming a commercial alliance with us, on the same broad basis that other nations do. It will be no difficult matter to convince any reasonable man, that Great Britain would still enjoy under such treaties the greatest share and most valuable parts of our trade; but the best and most liberal of the British subjects feel themselves humbled, in the idea of quitting their sovereignty over us; and this with many will preclude all reasoning on the subject. Whether Governor Johnstone is of this number or not, I cannot tell; but we know he is strongly opposed to our independence, although unbounded in offers of everything else. No offers must tempt us; they ought not to have a hearing of one moment, unless preceded by acknowledgment of our independence, because we can never be a happy people under their domination.

'I have frequently ventured to assert here, that Congress will not give up one iota of their former resolves on this subject, nor do a thing in the least degree inconsistent with their public faith, plighted in the ratification of the treaty with France. I am sure you will make my words good.'

readiness to make peace, when the King of Great Britain should provide the way for it, by acknowledging the independence of the United States, or withdrawing his fleets and armies. The affair was also now encumbered with a new condition, since the alliance with France rendered the assent of that nation necessary, before a treaty of peace could be confirmed.

But these things are matters of history, and this is no place to dwell upon them any farther, than to show the active and responsible agency taken in them by Mr Morris. It is known that the Commissioners met with a total failure, by reason of the inadmissible, and in some respects offensive propositions, which they were authorized to hold out, their indiscreet mode of presenting them, and the adventurous experiment of one of their number, who had the effrontery to tamper with the integrity of some of the most distinguished individuals in Congress, vainly supposing, that the lure of British gold would effect what was unattainable by the power of British arms, and the arts of negotiation. In short, the result of this mission was every way unpropitious to the interests of those by whom it was planned, as it left a settled disgust on the minds of the Americans, rather than respect for the motives, or faith in the professions of their enemy.

In the management of the business in Congress, and in the views of the subject which went abroad, and made impressions on the public, Mr Morris must be considered as having a chief share. He penned the reports and resolves, that were from time to time issued, and when the matter was brought to a close, he drew up, as one of a committee appointed for the purpose, a sketch of the whole proceedings, which was published. This performance was entitled, '*Observations on the American Revolution*,' and extended to a hundred and twenty two closely printed pages. In addition to an account of the doings of Congress, in regard to the Commissioners, there is a condensed and well written introduction, containing an outline of the causes of the war, the means used by the Americans to avert it, their unavailing efforts to secure a recognition of their

rights, and the chief events that had hitherto occured. The whole was executed with address and ability, manifesting a deep knowledge of the principles and reasons on which the contest was founded, and an ardor of patriotism not surpassed in any writings of the day. As soon as the pamphlet reached London, it was reprinted entire in Almon's Remembrancer.*

In the month of October, 1778, the instructions were prepared to be sent from Congress to Dr Franklin, as Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Versailles.

It is an honorable testimony to the high standing of Mr Morris in Congress, that the task of drafting these instructions was assigned to him, and the more so, as they were the first, which had ever been sent to an American Minister Plenipotentiary at a foreign court. To show the confidence reposed by Congress in their new ally, his most Christian Majesty, Mr Morris had an interview with the French Minister, M. Gerard, and read to him the instructions before they were submitted for the decision of Congress. These gentlemen entered into a free and amicable discussion of their several parts.

One important feature was struck out at the suggestion of M. Gerard. It was among the favorite schemes of a party in Congress to drive the British from the seaports, and thus multiply the means and conveniences of building up an American navy. An article to this effect was introduced into the instructions to Dr Franklin, enjoining him to use his efforts to persuade the French Ministry to send out an augmented naval armament, which, in conjunction with the American land forces, should be adequate to such an object. M. Gerard had doubts of the scheme, deeming it neither practicable nor expedient. He did not believe the British could be driven from

---

* In the *Remembrancer* for the year 1778, page 300, there is a long letter addressed to the Commissioners, and signed '*An American*,' to which the following note is appended. 'This letter is ascribed to Samuel Adams, of Massachusetts Bay.' But the letter was written by Gouverneur Morris.

the seaports, in which their force was concentrated, and where they had peculiar advantages for defending themselves. Besides, if such a thing were feasible, they would settle down in some other quarter, where they would command equal facilities for doing mischief. To compel them to change their attitude was not necessarily to weaken their power. And as for the pleasing vision of an American navy, two or three years at least must be consumed in such an undertaking, before it could arrive at the dignity of usefulness, even if it should escape the attacks of the enemy in its nascent state, and this with a great expenditure and the tendency of protracting the war beyond its probable duration. The good sense of these hints was too cogent to be overlooked, and the article on this head was left out of the instructions.

The project for attacking Canada came likewise into the discussion with the French Minister, but he discouraged it, as in truth he was directed to do before he left France, it having been the settled policy of that court from the beginning to let Canada remain in the hands of the British, although it has generally been supposed a part of the French King's intention in joining the United States to recover that province, which had been lost in a way not calculated to flatter the pride of his nation, in the preceding war with England. It is certain, however, that the positive instructions to both of his Ministers in America prove his views to have been the reverse of this supposition. He was resolved neither to take possession of Canada himself, nor assist the United States in such an enterprise, although if actually attacked, or even taken by the Americans, no interference was to be attempted, nor obstacles thrown in their way.

This was the policy of France, steadily and secretly pursued, both in regard to Canada and Nova Scotia. I say secretly, because neither the American government, nor Dr Franklin in Paris, was acquainted with it. The grounds of this policy may not be easily discovered, but the reason for keeping it secret is manifest. Everybody in America, from

the leaders in Congress and the army downward, looked upon the conquest of Canada as the glorious achievement, which of all others would most signalize their arms, and promote the ends of the war. The time, the manner, and the means, were always matters of perplexing uncertainty, but the great object itself no one ever regarded in any other light, than as an acquisition of momentous weight in the broad scale of American affairs. The French government were well informed of this state of feeling; they well understood the consequence of uttering aloud sentiments of a different complexion. It was clear, that their aims would be misinterpreted, their motives suspected. Hence the instructions to their ministers, not to second any proposals of this kind, with encouragement of aid from France, nor to show a hostility to the measure by taking an open and decided stand in opposing it.

In fact the French always had fears of the American love of conquest. They had pledged themselves to support the independence of the United States to the last, but not to go abroad to the north, and the west, and the south, seeking foreign adventures, and extent of dominion. If this spirit were allowed to predominate, there would be no end to the war, till the whole continent and the islands were forced to come under the banners of freedom, and receive, willingly or not, the proffered bounty of independence. Whatever glory or advantage might have redounded to the United States, from such an extent of territory and power, if achieved by their own prowess, it was certainly no part of the contract with France, that she should go out with them, on crusades of this sort, paying her own charges, and loaning money to her allies to pay theirs. It was the express stipulation of France, that she would continue the war at all hazards till the independence of the United States, in their original extent, should be secured. This pledge she redeemed faithfully, generously, to the very letter, and in the very spirit of the contract.

The conversation on the other parts of the instructions to Dr Franklin took a discursive range, touching upon various inter-

ests of the two parties to the alliance. Mr Morris observed, that fears were entertained of the influence of Spain over France, by reason of the close relations that existed between the royal families of the two nations, and that preposessions imbibed from this quarter might lead the latter to adopt a false policy in regard to the western frontier; it being even suspected by some, that France was willing Canada should be held by England, out of complaisance to her ancient friend, with the view of diverting the attention of the Americans on that side, in which case they would be less likely to turn their thoughts towards the Spanish territories in the regions of the Mississippi. Should such a fancy dwell in the heads of the French Cabinet, he considered it delusive and unwise, for the English would be masters of the Lakes, and naturally friends of the Americans, from a similarity of habits and a reciprocity of wants and benefits. For the same reason, they would be mutually hostile to the Spaniards, who would thus gain two troublesome neighbors. Whereas, in the other state of the case, the worst that could happen to them would be to have one.

M. Gerard replied, that he was ignorant of the disposition and policy of Spain, but he knew that power was jealous of the spirit of enterprise shown by many of the American people; that he had himself been informed from credible sources, that since the beginning of the war, four or five thousand persons from New England had planted themselves on the banks of the Mississippi in the Natchez country; that such a force on a frontier so little known, joined to the views entertained by the American government in regard to St Augustine, Pensacola, and Mobile, was calculated to excite distrust in Spain; that it seemed to him important for the United States to give some surety to that power, by fixing certain limits which should not be passed. In answer to Mr Morris's question, as to the nature and extent of this surety, M. Gerard said, that the renunciation of any design upon Pensacola, Mobile, and St Augustine, and even of the navigation of the Mississippi, would perhaps be necessary to accomplish

an object so important to both parties, and ensure the confidence and friendship of Spain. Mr Morris replied, that many of his colleagues thought it was time to pass a law *de coercendo imperio*, that to extend the territory of the United States farther to the south and west would be rather to weaken than confirm the union, and that the poverty and vigor of the north were the best safeguards of the Republic. He said these same persons considered it for the interest of the Confederation, that the navigation of the Mississippi, as high up as the mouth of the Ohio, should appertain exclusively to his Catholic Majesty, because it would be the only means of retaining under dependance to the Republic the mass of population, which would spring up between the Ohio and the Lakes, and in the eastern settlements of Virginia; that the inhabitants of these immense regions, whether English or Americans, having an outlet down the St Lawrence on one side, and the Mississippi on the other, would be in a condition to domineer over the power of the United States, and even of Spain, and would in the end render themselves independent.

M. Gerard asked if this was the general sense of Congress, for he knew several members, who thought the navigation of the Mississippi should belong equally to the English and Americans. Mr Morris answered, that these topics had not been agitated in such a manner, as to come to any positive result, but the prevalent feeling was, that it would not be expedient to extend dominion to the south, and he believed the persons, who wished to take possession of the Floridas, had a scheme of ceding them to Spain for a pecuniary consideration; and that some of those at least, who were bent on securing the navigation of the Mississippi, were interested in the new establishments in that quarter.*

---

* It is proper to state, perhaps, that the substance of this conversation has been drawn from a despatch of M. Gerard to the Count de Vergennes, dated at Philadelphia, October twentieth, 1778, and now depos-

The most essential article in the instructions to Dr Franklin was that, which enjoined on him the necessity of procuring pecuniary aid from the French Court, and of representing in their strong and true features the distresses of the country, on account of the deranged state of the finances, and the impossibility of prosecuting the war to any good effect, unless supplies of money from some quarter could be obtained. To put Dr Franklin in possession of facts and arguments on this subject of vital importance, Mr Morris wrote *Observations on the Finances of America*, designed to illustrate and accompany the article in question, and which Dr Franklin was ordered by a letter from the President of Congress to lay before the French Ministry.

---

ited among the '*American Papers*,' which I examined in the Archives of Foreign Affairs in Paris.

The concluding paragraph of this same despatch, although on another subject, will not be the less interesting to every American reader. It was written at the end of the second campaign, in which General Lafayette had been engaged in America. Eighteen months before, it must be remembered, he escaped from France in defiance of the authority of the King, and entreaties of his friends, with a determination to fight the battles of liberty in the new world. He was now about to return to his native country, honored with the confidence and marked approbation of Congress, and the hearty applause of the whole American people.

'I ought not to terminate this long despatch,' says M. Gerard to the Count de Vergennes, 'without rendering to the wisdom and dexterity of the Marquis de Lafayette, in the part he has taken in these discussions, the justice which is due to his merits. He has given most salutary counsels, authorized by his friendship and experience. The Americans have strongly solicited his return with the troops, which the King will send. He has replied with a due sensibility, but with an entire resignation to the will of the King.

'I cannot forbear saying, that the conduct equally prudent, courageous, and amiable of the Marquis de Lafayette, has made him the idol of the Congress, the army, and the people of America. A high opinion is entertained of his military talents. You know how little I am inclined to adulation, but I should be wanting in justice, if I did not transmit to you these testimonials, which are here in the mouth of the whole world.'

It was the purpose of these Observations, to show the causes of the financial difficulties in the United States, and to suggest remedies. The history of the paper currency was touched upon, and also the reasons of its depreciation, its effects in producing monopolies, deranging prices, creating distrust, and thus gradually destroying its own value. Although the disease was radical and complicated, the remedies were simple. Taxation, subsidies, and loans were the three prescriptions, each of which, if duly applied, would work a cure. The first was impossible in the existing state of things, because the absolute amount of money in the country was not adequate to the payment of taxes, and new emissions of paper would only increase the evil. Domestic loans were equally fallacious, because they must be paid in the defective currency, subject to fluctuation, which would not tempt money holders to risk a transaction of this sort. The only remaining resource was in foreign loans or subsidies, and, after coming to this point, the business was turned over as usual to Dr Franklin, to be managed by such address, ingenuity, and force of argument, as he should find at his command.

Notwithstanding the coldness of M. Gerard, Congress could not forego their splendid scheme of attacking Canada in concert with France, and it accordingly found its way into the instructions to Dr Franklin, explained at large by a copy of the plan proposed for conducting the attack. Meantime the scheme was submitted to General Washington, whose letter in reply, pointing out many objections and discouragements, was referred to a committee, of which Mr Morris was chairman. The committee concurred in the views of Washington, and reported to that effect, at no small sacrifice of their own bright anticipations. The Canada project was thus laid aside, not seasonably enough to keep it out of the instructions to Dr Franklin, but in time to transmit to France by General Lafayette the ultimate decision of Congress, and prevent any steps being taken in the affair under those instructions.

During the winter General Washington visited Philadelphia,

in compliance with a request from Congress, for the purpose of consulting and agreeing on the operations of the next campaign. Mr Morris's long residence in the camp at Valley Forge, and his intimate knowledge of the arrangement and concerns of the army, indicated him as a suitable member to be one of the committee, for holding conferences with the commander in chief on the present occasion. The interminable Canada plan came up again, underwent a new investigation, and was dismissed without grace. Various modes of operation were then examined, future contingences weighed, means estimated, chances balanced, the probable force of the enemy discussed, as well as that which Congress could bring into the field, the most feasible points of attack considered, and at last a general system was struck out, which was to serve as the prominent aim both of Congress and the commander in chief, and to guide them into the same train of design and action.

CHAPTER XII.

DEBATES IN CONGRESS ON THE TERMS OF PEACE.—MR MORRIS DRAFTS THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.—SILAS DEANE.—THOMAS PAINE.—MR MORRIS'S SPEECH IN THE AFFAIR OF PAINE.—TREATIES WITH FOREIGN POWERS.

Although we have hitherto seen Mr Morris in Congress mainly devoted to the interests of the army, and other matters of domestic concern, yet he was not less vigilant in becoming acquainted with the foreign relations, nor less active and laborious in giving his services to that department. As a proof of this, it needs only be mentioned, that in February, 1779, when a committee of five was appointed to consider certain important despatches from the American Commissioners abroad, and communications from the French Minister in the United States, Mr Morris was placed at its head. The report of

this committee, in its character and consequences, was perhaps the most important that was brought forward during the war. It was the basis of the peace, which ultimately ensued, and embraced all the points then deemed essential or advisable to be urged in a treaty with England, when the time for such an arrangement should arrive. The question of boundaries, evacuation of the posts within the territory of the United States, the fisheries, navigation of the Mississippi, and other topics of moment, were introduced under distinct heads, and in a form to be examined and discussed in Congress.

This report was speedily called up, and kept under debate from time to time, as other business would allow, for the space of six months, that is, till the middle of August, during which period all the weighty principles of the expected treaty of peace were thoroughly canvassed, and the sentiments of each member clearly ascertained and openly expressed. Much unanimity prevailed, respecting the points in which the ministers for concluding a treaty were to be positively instructed, and wisely such points only were brought into serious discussion, or to a decisive issue. There would doubtless have been differences and contending opinions, had the inquiry come up, how far modifications or concessions should be made, under supposable circumstances, as the price of peace. Questions of this sort were prudently kept out of sight, and the attention of Congress fixed upon the principles considered fundamental, leaving a due latitude for contingences to the discretion of the negotiators. Mr Morris took a large share and a prominent lead in this long debate. When it came to an end, its results were to be embodied into a form of instructions to the Ministers, afterwards to be appointed for making peace. The drafts of these instructions were from the pen of Mr Morris, and unanimously adopted by Congress without change.

An affair, in which he got deeply concerned, in common with nearly all the members of Congress on one side or the other, was the controversy emanating from Silas Deane's agency and negotiations in Europe. Owing to particular circumstances,

this thing made a great noise at the time, being puffed into a consequence wholly disproportioned to its merits, or its true bearing on other events. Silas Deane went to France as an agent for certain mercantile and political purposes, on account of Congress. After being there five or six months, he was joined by Franklin and Arthur Lee, who, together with himself, were appointed Commissioners, to obtain military or pecuniary aids from France, and negotiate a treaty of alliance, whenever that power should be ready for such a measure. At the end of a year and a half Deane was recalled, ostensibly to give Congress intelligence of their foreign affairs, but in reality through the machinations of his enemies. It was urged, that he had transcended his powers in engaging French officers to come to the United States, with promises of military rank and pay in the army. From the facts of the case, this seems probable, but surely this was a pardonable error of judgment, since he could have no other motive in the transaction, than that of advancing the interests of his country. Congress were much perplexed, however, with his engagements, and lost their patience when it was too late for their agent to remedy his mistakes. It should be remembered, nevertheless, that the services of Lafayette and the Baron de Kalb were secured to the United States, by one of these unauthorized stipulations of Deane.

Long before the arrival of this Commissioner in Philadelphia, there began to spring up divisions and personal antipathies in Congress, connected with the management of their foreign affairs, and the coals of discord were kept alive, and almost blown into a flame, by the ill advised and intemperate letters, which some of their agents abroad wrote home, not only to individuals in that Assembly, but under the guise of public despatches. In short, there was already a party in Congress, who had unconsciously prejudged his case, and whose opinions were embittered by the bold insinuations and acrimonious censure, that had proceeded with an unmeasured bounty from his enemies on the other side of the water.

Hence, when Deane requested Congress to examine his official conduct, while acting as a Commissioner, and to pass a resolution either of approval or disapproval, he met with delays, and was put off from time to time with a partial hearing. Kept in this state of suspense for more than four months, he at last resolved on the unwise step of publishing an Address to the People, bringing his complaints before them, and detailing incidents in which he showed a plentiful lack of discretion, and not the highest purity of motive. He attacked the character of men, to be sure, who he knew had injured him deeply and intentionally, but these were men in public stations, and the facts sustaining his charges were not of a kind to be brought forward in such a manner, and under such circumstances, without the hazard of putting in jeopardy the public tranquillity, and the best interests of his country. *

At this time Thomas Paine was a clerk in the office of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, or, as he was sometimes called, the secretary to that committee. Of course he had access to all the foreign despatches, being bound by his oath of office however, as well as by the laws of honor, not to reveal or expose anything they contained. When Deane's Address came out, Paine entered the lists in the opposition, and filled the newspapers with columns of criticisms and confutations, duly seasoned with that cool, but irritating kind of invective, which he knew well how to use.

In one of those pieces, alluding to Beaumarchais' supplies, he had the imprudence to affirm, that they were a gift from the French Government, and the more than folly to add, that, if

* In writing to Mr Jay on the sixteenth of August, 1778, Mr Morris says, 'We are at length fairly setting about our finances and foreign affairs. I much wish you were here. Many persons, whom you know, are very liberal of illiberality. Your friend Deane, who has rendered most essential services, stands as one accused. The storm increases, and I think some of the tall trees must be torn up by the roots.'

any person would come to his office, he would produce the original documents verifying his assertion. The French Minister deemed it necessary to take notice of such a declaration, in which the King was charged with openly sending aids to the colonies, while he was yet in alliance with England. As the charge came from a person known to be connected with the public offices, M. Gerard regarded it as claiming the attention of Congress, and presented a memorial to that effect. Paine was arraigned in presence of the House, and confessed himself to be the author of the offensive communications. After he retired, various resolutions were offered and discussed, the purport of which was, that the declaration in regard to France was false, and that the secretary of the Foreign Committee ought to be immediately dismissed, not only on this ground, but for violating his oath and misusing his trust, in publishing selections from the secret correspondence in his office.

Strange as it may seem, this business gave rise to a heated debate, and no decision was had respecting it at the end of the second day. On the morning of the third, Paine sent in his resignation. It is to be presumed, that the broad field of Deane's case, and the foreign affairs generally, came under discussion, otherwise it cannot be imagined that there should have been a difference of opinion. Mr Morris had early ranged himself on the side of Deane, and sustained the cause of that Commissioner, whenever it came before Congress, for such was the attitude in which it was presented at the beginning, that it was necessary for the members to take sides and act in some sort as partizans, whether willingly or not. On the present occasion it is safe to presume, that Deane's friends were Paine's enemies, and *vice versa*.

Among Mr Morris's papers, there is the copy of a speech delivered by him during the second day's debate, on the back of which he has entered this memorandum; '*taken down from memory, to obviate misrepresentation.*' This hint would imply, that it was a warm contest. It is the only in-

stance, which I have discovered, of his writing out a speech pronounced in the old Congress. From the nature of its contents, and as indicating the temper of Congress at that time, the performance is worth preserving.

'Mr President,

'As the several motions on your table appear to be founded upon the same principle, I shall make some few observations which relate to them all, without balancing their respective merits, or taking notice of the many inaccuracies with which they abound. It gave me great pain, Sir, to hear in the debates, both of yesterday and this morning, the word *party* made use of. This is a word which can do no good, but may produce much evil. If there be a party among us, the name is unnecessary. If there be not, it is unjust. And, certainly, there is not. There is indeed in this House a chosen band of patriots, who have a proper respect for each other's opinion, a proper sense of each other's feelings, and whose bosoms glow with equal ardor in the common cause, but no *party*.

'Gentlemen mean nothing but the public good, though sometimes they mistake their object. But I would warn them against indulging too far this tenderness for each other. When *one* has in view a favorite object, or has adopted a favorite opinion, others hastily catch the idea. The warm effusion flies from breast to breast, and reason lags in the pursuit. Hence arises a prepossession, which reason combats in vain.

'I hope for indulgence, whilst I state the case before us as it really exists. I know that a gentleman stands in a disagreeable attitude, whilst combatting principles, which *appear* to flow from a regard to the privileges of a citizen, and respect for the rights of mankind. Yesterday we were told by an honorable member, that these rights and privileges would be drawn into question. This he ventured to prophesy and warned us to beware. On this occasion the honorable member was in capacity to be an excellent prophet; a very excellent prophet, Mr President. But I am not to be terrified by these shadows. I

trust I shall be able to show, that the rights of a citizen are nowise concerned in the determination on the matter before us.

'Gentlemen exclaim, "do not deprive Mr Paine of his office, without giving him a copy of the charge; do not punish a citizen unheard!" I ask on what tenure he holds that office. Is it during good behavior? If it be, he must be convicted of malconduct, before he can be removed. But we are not the proper court to take cognizance of such causes. We have no criminal jurisdiction clearly; then, he ought not to be heard before us. But he does not hold his office during good behavior; it is during pleasure. And what are we? The sovereign power, who appointed, and who, when he no longer pleases us, may remove him. Nothing more is desired. We do not wish to punish him.

'What then do we ask? To turn a man out of office, who ought never to have been in it. Let us examine the circumstances. Mr Paine, Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, styling himself *Secretary of Foreign Affairs*, acknowledges himself to be the author of a publication highly dishonorable to his most Christian Majesty, and very injurious to him and us. Dishonorable to the King of France, because it is in direct contradiction to repeated assurances given to the British court. Injurious to our mutual interests, because it enables the Ministers of Great Britain to charge France with a breach of the treaties, and call upon other courts for the performance of engagements entered into, upon a view to that contingency. Gentlemen, who know Mr Paine, may be unwilling to believe this. It deserves consideration. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs is the person, who, of all others, must from the nature of his office be best acquainted with such transactions. His assertions, therefore, contain the fullest weight, which knowledge can give. And not only so, but from the importance of that office, none but the most approved and exalted character would be, by a wise people, entrusted to fill it. And, therefore, the ideas annexed to such a character will serve to authenticate his assertions.

'Foreigners, Sir, have not an adequate idea of the manner, in which business is conducted in this House, nor the difficulties we have labored under. They are led to compare everything on the scale of their own experience. And what would be the idea of a gentleman in Europe of this Mr Paine? Would he not suppose him to be a man of the most affluent fortune, born in this country of a respectable family, with wide and great connexions, and endued with the nicest sense of honor? Certainly he would suppose, that all these pledges of fidelity were necessary to a people in our critical circumstances. But, alas, what would he think, should he accidentally be informed, that this, our Secretary of Foreign Affairs, was a mere adventurer *from England*, without fortune, without family or connexions, ignorant even of grammar? Could he believe this? And if assured of the fact, and if possessed of common sense, would he not think that we were devoid of it? And yet, Sir, this is the man whom we would remove from office, and this is the man, who has been just now puffed as of great importance.

'Considering the case as it stands before us, there are three objects which require our attention. The first is, to obviate the ill effects of his publication. The second, to remove him from office. And the third, to assign proper reasons for that conduct, so as to connect the two first propositions together, and give a greater weight to all our measures.

'In order to obviate the ill consequences of his mad assertions, we must pointedly contradict them. I say we *must* contradict them, for to such a deplorable situation has this man reduced us, that, although many gentlemen in the House might be of a different opinion, they would find themselves urged by irresistible motives of policy to contradict his assertions. Happily, we have on our table the fullest evidence to ground a declaration, that what he has published is untrue.

'We must then proceed to assign our reasons for removing him from his office. These cannot be wanting. For, in the first place, he never was fit for it; and, in the second place, he

has abused it in the instance before us most flagrantly, and therefore is utterly undeserving of any farther confidence.

'Lastly, we must remove him, for without this, in contradicting him, we shall not be believed. Nor is this the worst of the matter. The presumption is, that he would not have written these things without our consent, and therefore a disavowal of the person becomes necessary, not only to give credit to a disavowal of the thing, but to convince our allies, that we ourselves are not the authors of this infamous falsehood. And here gentlemen step in and tell us of Mr Paine's importance. Sir, were he really of importance, nay, more, were his assertions really true, I should not hesitate a moment to dismiss him from our service. Duty to our ally requires it. Duty to ourselves requires it. Look at his threatening letter on your table. What! are we reduced to such a situation, that our servants shall abuse the confidence reposed in them, shall beard us with insolent menaces, and we shall fear to dismiss them without granting a trial forsooth? And what are we to try? Has he not acknowledged himself to be the author of those exceptionable paragraphs? Are we not able to judge of them, and to determine what they mean? Do we not know, that they contain a falsehood? Suppose Mr Paine to be now standing at our bar, what would you do? Would you confess an ignorance of language, and ask what those paragraphs mean? Surely you would not. Would you ask him whether the idea contained in them is true or false? It is utterly unnecessary. His answer is ready; that they are true. But we know them to be false, and we can hardly be so weak as to balance in our judgment between Mr Paine's opinion, and the full evidence on our table.

'What then remains, unless it be to ask his advice as to our future conduct! Sir, he will tell us that he is Thomas Paine, author of all the writings under the signature of Common Sense, and Secretary of Foreign Affairs; that he is a man of infinite importance, far more entitled to our respect, than the most Christian King, and that we must not dare to dismiss him from our

service, because to his other titles he adds that of a 'CITIZEN OF PENNSYLVANIA.' And should we take his advice? And shall we be moved by his threats? And shall we be amused by paltry tales of this person's importance? I hope not. I am confident we should not have wasted so much time, and had so many motions on this subject, but that some gentlemen feel themselves interested in supporting *the rights of a citizen*; and but for that mutual confidence, and good opinion, and reciprocal sentiment, which are too apt to mislead those, who are not constantly under the guard of reason.'

It may not be amiss to state, that, for some time previous to this occurrence, there had been a good deal of skirmishing in the newspapers between Morris and Paine. The articles of the latter were known by his usual signature, *Common Sense*. He had attacked Morris, as he did other people, with an indelicacy of censure amounting to a coarseness, little becoming a gentleman, or an honorable disputant. In the affair of the British Commissioners, and on other subjects, Morris had written under the signature of AN AMERICAN. At length there appeared a series of papers signed AMERICANUS, which, from their ability, and the resemblance of the adopted names, were supposed to come from Mr Morris. They were seized upon by Paine with his accustomed acrimony, and treated as containing principles at variance with the political interests of America. Among other charges, the author was accused of having a design to exclude the United States from the fisheries, and this charge was pressed in such a manner, not only by Paine, but also by another writter following in his track, and calling himself *Tiberius Gracchus*, that Mr Morris felt bound to come out with an anonymous disavowal, signed CATO, in which he denied that he was the author of the articles in question, or had any knowledge of them till they were published. But Paine was not silenced so easily, and he continued to write and affirm whatever pleased his fancy, or suited his purpose.

How far this little warfare of the quill might have operated

on the mind of Mr Morris, and inclined him to see the dark shades in Paine's character and conduct, the reader can judge. It is evident enough, however, that the offence merited, as its least punishment, a suspension from office, and nothing more was urged. Thirty years afterwards, when Paine, in the midst of his poverty and voluntary wretchedness, applied to Congress for a reward of his services during the revolution, he remembered the above speech, and took his revenge by calling the author, in his letter of application, 'prating Gouverneur Morris.' He professed also to have another provocation, as will be seen when we meet him hereafter in the prisons of Paris.

There was a difference of opinion at this time in Congress, as to the expediency of seeking foreign alliances, and formal recognitions of independence. Mr Morris was with the party, who were for maintaining a little reserve in this respect, and, as he expresses it, 'he opposed what seemed to him a rage for treaties.' Like the shield of the contending knights, the question had fairly two sides, each of which appeared of a different hue and quality, according to the position from which it was viewed, whilst the body and substance of the thing itself remained the same. In the first place, the dignity and respectability, which would attach to the United States, by being admitted into the family of nations, gave a tempting aspect to one side, which was made still more attractive by the possibility, (a very slender ground it must be confessed) that those, who should have the good nature to admit us as equals, would also have the fellow feeling to aid our necessities. The ardent, the aspiring, the statesmen of sanguineous temperament, and those who were dazzled with the kindling prospect of national glory, took this view of the subject, and urged it as an essential act of respect for ourselves, to press foreign courts to take us by the hand, and bid us even a reluctant welcome into their circle. However shy and cautious at first, it was affirmed, that they would like us better the more they knew us, and that in the end we should be gainers by the connexion.

But the other party saw these things in a different light. As for national dignity, they could not think it was promoted by going about soliciting alliances, begging the great powers to take us under their wings, cover us from our enemies, and consent to call us an independent people; for, after all, such a recognition implied no more than the name, since we were already *de facto*, *de jure divino*, and *de haute lutte*, an independent sovereignty, let the monarchs of Europe think, say, or do what they would in regard to us. Our true dignity, therefore, required that our alliance should be sought by those, whom it would benefit, and whose advances would be a proof of their willingness to meet us on terms of equality.

Among our ministers abroad, Dr Franklin looked at this side of the shield, whilst Mr John Adams was as intent in gazing on the opposite. The latter said, give us treaties with all the world; the former, let us wait. It was moreover doubtful, whether as a general principle treaties in any case were expedient. They would draw us into the whirlpool of European politics, and involve us in contests with which we should really have no concern; fetter us with engagements, that would essentially mar our interests in the time of wars between foreign powers; and finally take away from us the advantages, which we might derive from a state of neutrality. A treaty implies a mutual privilege, which each party to the contract is bound to concede or bestow. The ever recurring wars of Europe derange the healthful order of international compacts, and the belligerents, in retaliating upon each other, never fail to encroach on the rights of neutrals, and seldom refrain from violating the treaties with their friends. This is the necessary consequence of war, and must continue so, till the code of neutral commerce is better defined by the consent and practice of civilized nations, than it ever yet has been, or perhaps will be, unless the passion for gain and adventures shall be released, in some degree, from its strong hold in the human breast. Hence, separated as we are by a wide ocean from the scenes and causes of turmoil, we are admonished

equally by reason and sound policy to avoid, as much as possible, connexions, subject to be perpetually interrupted by events never under our control, and which entail upon us the inevitable fatality of being the injured party. If we receive no benefits from treaties, it is a sufficient consolation that we grant none. The laws of nations afford to commerce all the protection it requires, and governments are too much interested in the profits and convenience of an interchange of commodities, to encroach upon these laws in the times of peace.

Such is the spirit of the doctrines held by some members in the old Congress. Experience has proved, that they were not without wisdom. Has a treaty yet been made, which has been respected by a European power at war? Our first treaty with France was violated, as soon as the hostile designs of that power made it her interest to cramp the commerce, and diminish the resources of England. The first treaty of peace with Great Britain, it is true, was originally infringed without such a cause, but suffered equally afterwards in the retaliatory proceedings against France. Of other treaties it is not necessary to speak. It will be found, that in every European war, since our independence was declared, they have shared the same fate. But the above remarks, in regard to treaties, do not necessarily apply to conventions for specific purposes, nor to arrangements for colonial trade.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONTROVERSY BETWEEN NEW YORK AND VERMONT.—VIEWS OF CLINTON, MORRIS, AND HAMILTON ON THAT SUBJECT.—MR MORRIS RETIRES FROM CONGRESS.—VALUABLE PAPERS WRITTEN BY HIM ON AMERICAN CURRENCY AND FINANCE.—ACCIDENT OCCASIONING THE LOSS OF HIS LEG.—SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

Besides the affairs of a national bearing, which claimed the attention of all the members of Congress in common, there was one of special consideration devolving chiefly on the delegates from New York. This was the controversy between that State and Vermont, respecting the independence and jurisdiction of the people inhabiting that territory.

For nearly thirty years before the Revolution, there had been heart-burnings and disputes between the colonies of New Hampshire and New York, concerning the tract of country included between the Connecticut River and Lake Champlain, then called the *New Hampshire Grants*. These first arose from the circumstance, of the Governor of New Hampshire assuming and exercising the power of granting lands in that territory. Many settlers from different parts of New England purchased lands, and established themselves there, under the authority of his warrants. The government of New York considered this an encroachment upon their limits and rights, and remonstrated with New Hampshire against such a proceeding. The controversy grew warm, and was at length referred to the King. After much delay before that tribunal, a decision was finally given in favor of New York, confirming to that colony a jurisdiction over the whole country, as far east as the Connecticut River.

This result was far from putting the question to rest, or

quieting disorders. The New Yorkers not only claimed jurisdiction under this decision, but a *title* to the lands, thus annulling all the contracts of the Governor of New Hampshire, and requiring the settlers to pay for their lands a second time, or leave them. Warrants were issued, and purchases made, covering tracts already held under the New Hampshire title, which had been paid for, and in some instances cleared of their timber and cultivated as farms. It is no wonder, that the people, who had now increased to a respectable number, should be indignant at such a measure, and put themselves in an attitude of self defence and resistance. In short, there sprang up in the hearts of these borderers a rancor and enmity against New York, not to be soothed by legislative enactments, nor quelled by the civil arm. They took into their own hands the task of governing themselves, and protecting their lives and property, heedless of the menaces of their powerful and grasping neighbors. They insisted, and certainly with more than the show of reason, that, by conferring jurisdiction, the King's Council could never intend to destroy the titles of the inhabitants to the lands, which they had honestly bought and paid for; and if it were possible that so gross a piece of injustice should have been designed, their first duty to themselves required that they should regard it neither with respect nor obedience.*

---

* The feelings of the people, in regard to the New Yorkers, were sometimes displayed by a rather ludicrous exhibition. In the town of Bennington there was an inn, called the '*Green Mountain Tavern*,' which had for its sign the skin of a catamount, stuffed and raised on a post twenty-five feet from the ground, with its head turned towards New York, and its teeth grinning defiance to all intruders from that quarter.

In this tavern the Committee, or board of government, acting in the triple capacity of a legislative, judicial, and executive body, used to sit for the trial of persons suspected of being hostile to the sovereignty of the ruling powers, or partiasns of New York. Sùch persons were regarded much as the tories were during the war. One mode of

At this juncture the revolutionary war broke out, and the attention of all parties was drawn to topics of weightier moment. But the successive governments of New York took care not to let the pretensions of their predecessors become dormant, and even during the shortlived and unsettled dynasties of Conventions and Provincial Congresses, they looked with jealousy upon the forms of independence, which the Green Mountain Boys were assuming, and received it in no good part, that the Continental Congress should sanction the raising of a regiment of troops among them, who were to act in some degree distinct from the authority of New York. As soon as the constitution was established, and the wheels of the new machine began to move, this business of Vermont was again taken up in earnest. It was referred to Congress, and strong appeals were made against the doings and claims of these refractory citizens. The mountaineers also sent on their agents to Congress, and demanded to be made a State, and to be taken into the fraternity, as an integral part of the Union.

Meantime Ethan Allen, being exchanged and released from captivity, returned home. He had been the champion of this cause from its origin, and now resumed it with his accustomed ardor and energy. He penned a vindication of the people of Vermont, and of their right to become an independent State. Mr Jay wrote to Morris, in allusion to this performance; 'Ethan Allen has commenced author and orator. A Philippic of his against New York is handed about. There is quaintness, impudence, and art in it.' But Ethan Allen did not confine himself to his pen. He talked, and harangued, and

---

punishing an offender of this sort was to tie him in an armed-chair, hoist him by a rope up the signpost, and cause him to be suspended there for two hours under the catamount's claws, in the sight of the people. *See Vermont State Papers, p.* 36. This was more convenient, more expeditious, and probably quite as effectual, as the tar and feathers of a later time.

made himself busy among the people, and kept the tone of popular sentiment up to the pitch he desired.

The legislature of New York seemed resolved on carrying their point, and ministered fuel to the flame by their discussions and resolves. Governor Clinton, prompted by his former impressions, his private feelings, and his official duty, wrote repeatedly and in pressing terms to the President of Congress and the New York delegates, calling their attention to this subject as one vitally important to the State.

It is to be presumed, that the New England members generally, for wise political reasons, preferred that Vermont should become an independent State ; but from the sketch of a debate on the subject, preserved in Mr Morris's handwriting, it appears that they did not avow this ground openly. Roger Sherman, who was thought secretly to encourage the Vermont party, declared in this debate that Congress had no right to decide the controversy, that the confederation was not complete, and if it were, they could do no more than act as meditators, that Vermont ought to be heard in the case as well as New York, that if both parties left it to the decision of Congress, after a full hearing, it might then be taken up with propriety, that the people of the Grants were never subject to New York by their own consent, that when independence was declared they were as much included in the declaration, as any other persons in the United States, and if they now had any differences to settle with their neighbors, it did not belong to Congress to interfere. Mr Gerry maintained nearly the same doctrine, denied the power of Congress to intermeddle, regarded the inhabitants of Vermont as *extra provincial*, who, as such, might set up for themselves, and believed an arbitrary decision by Congress would give fresh discontent and increase the difficulty. Some of the southern members accorded with these sentiments, and argued that nothing could be done at any rate, without definite instructions from the several States.

From some circumstances it may be inferred, that Mr Morris's views did not differ widely from those just enumerated.

He wrote to Mr Jay; 'Vermont is yet Vermont, and I think no wise man will pretend to say when it will cease to be so. The local situation of that country is critical, and there are in it some ardent spirits, whose termigant quality has been too little attended to. Strange that men, in the very act of revolting, should so little consider the temper of revolters. But this is eternally the case. We can reason well in our closets about past events; we come out into the world and act blindly; we look towards the future and are bewildered.' To Governor Clinton he also wrote; 'I wish the business of Vermont were settled. I fear we are pursuing a shadow, with respect to that matter, and every day I live, and everything I see, give to my fears the consistence of opinion. It is a mighty arduous business to compel the submission of men to a political or religious government. It appears to me very doubtful whether Vermont, if independent, would not be more useful to New York, than as the Eastern District.' He added his belief, moreover, that the government of the State would be more manageable, and greater benefits derived to the people, from a less extent of territory; that the security of a republic is the diffusion of knowledge, and the vigor and spirit of a common sentiment, which may persuade and animate every heart; that 'the attempt would be more virtuous, and more honorable, to force cultivation through the barrier of a land monopoly, and to spread its influence over a hoarded wilderness, than vainly to subdue or acquire, or more vainly to covet, a wide dominion extensively useless.' These opinions were not relished by his friend, the Governor, nor by the other prominent characters in his own State. At a later period, in writing to Governor Clinton, he recurred to the same topics as follows.

'If I differ with you in sentiment on any occasion, it must be because we have a different view of the subject. Neither of us can be influenced by improper motives, especially on the present occasion. You speak of submitting cheerfully to the decision of Congress. Two questions arise here. Will Con-

gress decide? Will the disaffected submit? I doubt, both as to the one and the other. When I had the honor of a seat in Congress, I knew tolerably well the sentiments and dispositions on those subjects. Depend on it, time has not given you any strength there. You certainly cannot dictate to them. When I say *you*, I mean the State, or if you please its delegates. Whether you have not even less influence is a problem, which I will not resolve.

'Again, the revolt has daily less in it of novelty, and mankind have a reluctance at shaking what looks like establishment. We contemplate effects, and seldom concern ourselves about causes. In a hundred years not above one American in a hundred will care about the tea act, or stamp act, or examine whether the declaration of independence was justifiable or unjustifiable. Further, the Congress have daily less weight and more embarrassments. It is needless to ask why, supposing the fact. The Congress, therefore, will not, I believe, make any decision. Indeed, if all other obstacles were removed, still a great question will remain. Can Congress interfere between a State and its subjects? Admitting, however, their *decision* in all its force, would it be obeyed? No more nor sooner than the pope's bull. What then remains? Just what is now before us, either compulsion or neglect. Either let these people alone, or conquer them. I prefer the latter, but I doubt the means. If *we* have the means, let them be used, and let Congress deliberate and decide, or deliberate without deciding, it is of no consequence. Success will sanctify every operation. Forty victims to public *justice* or *wrath*, and submission from the rest of the people, will convince everybody. These are arguments, which are perfectly irresistible.

'If we have not the means of conquering these people, we must let them quite alone. We must continue our impotent threats, or we must make a treaty. If we let them alone, they become independent *de facto* at least. Hundreds will resort to them for different reasons. They will receive lands from

them, and cultivate them under of the powers which are. When the dispute is again renewed, these cultivators will I believe be better soldiers than logicians, and more inclined to defend their possessions, than examine their titles. If we continue our threats, they will either hate or despise us, and perhaps both. We shall thoroughly alienate their affections. They will become, in the unphilosophic language of politicians, our *natural* enemies, and always prove a most troublesome and disagreeable neighbor. On the whole, then, my conclusion is here, as on most other human affairs, act decisively, fight or submit—conquer or treat.'

Here the idea of a power in Congress to decide the controversy is abandoned. Indeed this idea gradually lost ground on all hands, and the New Yorkers began to talk of force, and compulsory measures. But the prudent were willing to pause at the threshold of such a design. When Hamilton was in Congress from New York, as late as July, 1783, he said, in writing to the Governor about the Vermont affair, 'it is a business in which nobody cares to act with decision. As intimated before, I much doubt the perseverance of Congress, if military coercion should become necessary. I am clear that the only chance the legislature have for receiving any part of the revolted territory, is by a compromise with New Hampshire, and this compromise must originate between the States themselves. I hope the legislature will revise the late act for confirming the possessions of those, who hold lands in that country. I am certain there are doubts upon the subject, and it were much to be wished such doubts did not exist. The present dissatisfaction of the army is much opposed to any experiment of force in a service, where scruples of interest or prejudice may operate.'

What is here meant, by 'scruples of interest,' may be explained by the fact, that a chief cause of the deep hostility of a party in New York towards their neighbors of the Green Mountains, originated in the purchase of lands, which the for-

mer had made, in consequence of the decision of the King's Council against the claims of New Hampshire. It was of course the interest of these proprietors to keep the contest alive, and if possible to subdue the refractory inhabitants, who had the hardihood to cling to the soil by the right of previous purchase and long possession. Things remained in the same unsettled state, after the war was closed; nor was anything decisive effected, till the constitution of the United States had been adopted by New York, when the difficulties with Vermont were at length amicably adjusted between the two parties; Vermont agreeing to pay thirty thousand dollars, as a full indemnity to persons in New York holding titles to lands within its boundaries.

The time at length approached, when the term for which Mr Morris had been elected to Congress was to expire. The members from New York were chosen annually by the legislature, and he had been twice returned. Meantime his duties in the national councils had confined him so closely, that he had not found leisure to visit his native State, nor scarcely to be absent for a day from active service, during a period of nearly two years. Rumors reached him, that his enemies were busy in framing a scheme to defeat his re-election, and some of his friends, among whom were Duer and Livingston, advised him to make a jaunt to the State of New York, while the legislature was in session, and attend to his interests in that quarter before the new election came round. He listened to their advice, and obtained leave of absence from Congress. His visit was too late, however, to counteract the aims and arts of his opponents, and he was superseded by another candidate.

The reason of this change, in the favorable opinion of the electors, is not manifest from any documents or records now remaining. The tradition is, that he was charged with neglecting the concerns of his State, and giving himself too much to the business and politics of the nation. Considering that there was commonly two or three other members present from

New York, who were not accused of any such deficiency, and in whose hands the comparatively subordinate affairs of the State might be presumed to receive their due share of notice, this must appear, as it really was, a very frivolous pretext. It redounded rather to his credit than reproach, and should have been an irresistible argument, in the estimation of all true patriots, for his being continued in a post, which his talents and habits rendered him so peculiarly well qualified to fill.

The policy of turning out an able representative, because he is better suited to manage the affairs of the whole nation, than those of a fragment, is like saving the mast, but letting the ship sink.

This pretext was a convenient handle to be laid hold of, however, by the ambitious and intriguing, to work upon narrow minds and politicians of the village stamp. To gain the men of this cast, in a contested election, is not unfrequently to gain the point at issue. Morris's lukewarmness about Vermont, and his heretical doctrines on that head, were doubtless numbered among his sins of neglect, if not of absolute *malfeasance*. A report also went about, that he was looking to a foreign mission, and was disposed to accept the place of Secretary of Legation under Dr Franklin in Paris. This was true at one time, though he afterwards changed his views, and declined being considered a candidate.

All these offences, and perhaps a much longer catalogue of a similar complexion, would seem to have been put forward by his zealous adversaries, as proofs of his indifference to the interests of his constituents, and of his unsuitableness to represent the State of New York in Congress.

The very imperfect sketch of his career in that Assembly, which has been given above, will show with what extreme injustice he could be charged with neglect of duty, and any one who will take the trouble of examining, even the meagre journals of Congress within that space, will find his conviction of this truth doubly enforced. He will be satisfied, that nothing but a prodigious industry, firm health of body, and a wide

grasp of mental powers, could have enabled him to endure and perform so much. If he was fond of society and relaxation, gayety and amusements, as is generally reported and believed, this is only another testimony to the remarkable energy of his character, the quickness of his conceptions, the fertility of his resources, his patience and self command. He never shrunk from any task; he never commenced one, which he left unfinished.

Not many years before his death, a person applied to him for written materials, respecting events of the revolution in which he had been personally engaged. His reply will add light to this subject. 'I have no notes,' said he, 'or memorandums of what passed during the war. I led then the most laborious life, which can be imagined. This you will readily suppose to have been the case, when I was engaged with my departed friend, Robert Morris, in the office of finance. But what you will not so readily suppose is, that I was still more harassed while a member of Congress. Not to mention the attendance from eleven to four in the House, which was common to all, and the appointment to special committees, of which I had a full share, I was at the same time chairman, and of course did the business, of three standing committees, viz. on the commissary's, quartermaster's, and medical departments. You must not imagine, that the members of these committees took any charge or burden of the affairs. Necessity, preserving the democratical forms, assumed the monarchical substance of business. The chairman received and answered all letters and other applications, took every step which he deemed essential, prepared reports, gave orders, and the like, and merely took the members of a committee into a chamber, and for the form's sake made the needful communications, and received their approbation, which was given of course. I was moreover obliged to labor occasionally in my profession, as my wages were insufficient for my support. I would not trouble you with this abstract of my situation, if it did not appear necessary to show you why I kept no notes of

my services, and why I am perhaps the most ignorant man alive of what concerns them.' All the papers he has left pertaining to that period, as well as the printed records, confirm the accuracy of this picture of his life in Congress.

Being no longer in a public station, he became a citizen of Pennsylvania, and established himself as a lawyer in Philadelphia, where he had already gained a respectable standing in his profession. During the five years of service, however, which he had rendered to the great cause of the country at that trying period, his mind had become so much imbued with the spirit of the time, and so deeply interested in national affairs, that the mere change from an official to a private situation was not enough to turn his thoughts from their accustomed channel, nor to weaken his efforts for the general good. On the contrary, it was at this crisis, that he exhibited a most creditable proof of his patriotism and talents.

At no time during the war did the finances of the country put on so gloomy an aspect, and its fiscal energies seem so completely prostrate, as in the year 1780. The machinery of credit, paper circulation, and forced certificates, had run its rounds, till it could move no longer, and the whole fabric threatened speedily to tumble in pieces, and involve the existence of the nation in its ruins. The impending danger was manifest to all, but how to avert it was a problem, which none ventured to solve. To submit to the fatality of circumstances, and be carried along with the train of events, encouraged only by the feeble taper of expiring hope, was all that was left to the bravest, the wisest, and the best. In a righteous cause, the justice of Heaven, and a calm endurance, were their confidence and strength.

During the months of February and March, of the year above named, Mr Morris wrote a series of essays on the continental currency and finance, which were published in the Pennsylvania Packet, and signed An American. In these papers he takes a wide view of the subject, and at the same time in a manner so methodical and condensed, as to be intel-

ligible to all readers. He begins by discussing, with great clearness and precision, the nature of money as a medium of exchange, the origin and utility of a paper substitute for specie, the mutual dependence of money and credit, the sources and foundation of credit, the causes of its decline, and the consequent depreciation of that sign of wealth, which relies exclusively on opinion for its support.

One of the devices of Congress to keep up a falling currency, or rather of the States upon the recommendation of Congress, was to bring it under the control of legislation, and, by compulsory enactments, to make it a legal tender at a specified value in payment of debts, thus adopting the principle, which has been at the bottom of all the knavery in the dealings among men since the world began, namely, an attempt to get something for nothing. Laws of this sort Mr Morris attacks with keen severity, showing them to be useless and, unjust. Before the paper depreciates they are useless, because it will then pass without them; afterwards they are unjust, for it defrauds the creditor of the whole amount of the depreciation, from the time the credit was given. Not only so, but the necessary effect of these laws is to destroy, and not to sustain, the value of the declining currency. If a square dollar of paper is as good as a round one of silver, why compel the holder of the latter to exchange it for the former? The plea of necessity will not stop the clamorous mouth of inquiry, nor soften the iniquity of injustice. It will destroy the confidence of the people in the integrity, as well as the wisdom, of the government.

Another phantom, which haunted the dreams of the statesmen of that day, was the regulation of prices by law. We have heretofore seen what was done to that effect in New England. This scheme Mr Morris classes with the tender laws, in its futility and unjustifiableness, and combats it upon the same principles. He discards the idea, that depreciation is a proper tax on the community, or a fit mode of collecting a tax, and shows that it falls chiefly on those, who, from their

attachment to the government, or confidence in it, receive the paper, and are thus ruined by the patriotic spirit, which it should be the aim of government to excite and cherish.

He next considers a tax on money, and argues against it as impolitic and iniquitous. It tends to drive money from circulation, or from the country, thus rendering it more difficult to collect a certain amount of it in the shape of a tax, and it induces the necessity of selling a greater quantity of commodities to produce that amount. 'Add to this,' he says, 'that the tax can never be rendered effectual. Money is of too subtle and spiritual a nature to be caught by the rude hand of the law. How will you find a man's money? I know there is a trite reply very ready with some folks. But what should we think of a government, that would offer to every one of its subjects a reward for perjury, exactly proportioned to his wealth? And what difference is there, except in name, between such an offer and laying a tax, the quantum of which is to be determined by the oath of the party. It must be admitted, that some men would by perjury elude the law, and this being admitted, it follows that the law would be a tax upon honesty and not upon money. A tax then on specie is unjust and unwise; a tax on paper is more unwise and more unjust; and of all modes, in which it can be laid or collected, depreciation is the worst.'

After thus discussing the topics of money, paper circulation, and taxes, he proceeds to that of monopoly, or the purchasing of articles in large quantities, with the view of speculating on an advance in the price, a practice much followed during the war, and against which the people had taken up strong prejudices, regarding it as one of the chief causes of calamity and distress. Mr Morris entertained an opposite opinion, and pursued the subject through an ingenious train of reasoning and facts. Putting out of the question the motives of monopolizers, which were like the motives of all other dealers, namely, to make money by selling at a higher price than the one at which they bought, he shows with great clearness that,

under the peculiar circumstances of the times, this method was productive of advantages to the community, which could have arisen in no other way, such as economy gradually introduced in consumption, the activity imparted to commerce, and the comparative steadiness of prices. Monopoly, to any dangerous extent, was moreover impossible, and as far as it could be practised was useful. To the people generally, who suffered without looking deeply into causes, this was a new doctrine, but it was set forth with an ability, which, if it did not in all cases produce a conviction, must have awakened reflection, and made them more contented with the necessary state of things.

Having explained and defended these principles, he applies them to the plans adopted and course pursued by Congress and the States, and exhibits the errors into which he conceives they had fallen in matters of finance, especially by obstructions thrown in the way of trade, and by futile attempts to regulate by law the business of barter and exchange, in the common articles of necessity and convenience, which no human power can control.

Difficulties having been thus stated and discussed, he next proceeds to suggest a remedy, and to show how public credit may be re-established, the whole amount of debt funded, and taxes raised for its payment. As this last point was the basis of the whole structure, he draws out a scheme of taxation, very ingeniously and plausibly framed, and we may believe, in the main, practicable, had anything been practicable in overcoming the obstacles, which pressed so heavily against every project for raising money, or taking out of the people's pockets what nobody was willing to spare, and what few had to give. But the truth is, the powers of Congress were so limited and feeble, that no plan, however sagaciously devised, or well matured, could be carried into effect. The people thought their work done, when they had suffered, murmured, and complained. Loud calls to duty that were not heard, recommendations not heeded, and reproaches not felt, were the only and

the unavailing resort of the patriot statesmen, whose task it was in the midst of peril and uncertainty to establish the existence, and wield the destinies, of the nascent empire.

In one of the essays is a passage, which suggests reflections at all times important, and which may frequently be presented with advantage to the public men of the United States.

'The last object I shall mention,' he observes, 'is the preservation of our federal union, which, in my poor opinion, will greatly depend on the management of our revenue. The articles of confederation were formed, when the attachment to Congress was great and warm. The framers of it, therefore, seem to have been only solicitous how to provide against the power of that body, which, by means of their foresight and care, now exists by mere courtesy and sufferance. This is an evil, which cannot at present be remedied, but if, in addition to this, a number of long accounts, and quotas, and proportions be left for settlement, until the enemy be removed at a distance, and the fear of them also removed, these will afford so much matter for litigation, and occasion such heart-burnings, and give such room for the intrigues, which Great Britain has already attempted, and which will doubtless be carried on by her or some other foreign power, that our union will become, what our enemies long since declared it was, a mere rope of sand. Congress then, like the traveller's coat in the fable, after having been hugged close through the stormy hour of danger, will be cast aside as a useless burden, in the calm and sunshine of peace and victory. Surely the consequences of such a measure, the struggles, the convulsions, the miseries, need not be pictured to a sensible and discerning people.'

Throughout these papers there is a tone of disinterested public spirit, a vein of profound and sagacious reflection, a practical wisdom, and a high moral feeling, which give a most favorable impression of the author's talents and good sense, and entitle him, even at that early period of his life, to an honorable rank among the distinguished men of the day. Indeed it is not likely, that there can anywhere else be found a view,

so complete and comprehensive, of the financial proceedings of the old Congress, the nature, operations, and effects of the paper currency, as in these essays.

In the month of May, 1780, an accident happened to Mr Morris, the severe effects of which continued through his life. While driving his phaëton in the streets of Philadelphia, the horses took fright and ran off, and, in endeavoring to control them, he was thrown with such violence upon the pavement, as to dislocate the ankle joint and fracture the bones of his left leg. His friend and favorite physician Dr Jones was out of town, but two others were called, who recommended an immediate amputation, as affording the best prospect of saving his life. This operation was accordingly performed, and the leg was taken off below the knee. He was confined three or four months, before he gained strength to go abroad, but he was in the family of Mr Plater, a member of Congress from Maryland then residing in Philadelphia, where he received every attention, which kindness and sympathy could dictate, and for which he ever after manifested the strongest sense of gratitude.

It has been affirmed, that Dr Jones was never satisfied with the precipitancy of the attending physicians, in advising an amputation, believing the fracture was not such as to render that extreme process necessary, and it is said the case has been commonly cited by surgical lecturers, acquainted with the particulars, as a proof of unskilful management and the rashness of hasty decision. Be this as it may, he submitted without remonstrance to an immediate operation. A gentleman present, who informed his mother of the event by letter, on the day it happened, wrote thus; 'Your son, with that firmness of mind, which accompanies him on all occasions, convinced of the necessity there was for it, consented to the amputation being instantly performed.' It is remarked, that his elasticity of spirits and cheerfulness of temper did not desert him, even in times of acute pain. An ancedote is related illustrative of this fact, and somewhat characteristic of

the man. The day after the accident occurred, a friend called to see him, who thought it his duty to offer as much consolation as he could, on an event so melancholy. He dwelt upon the good effects, which such a trial would produce on his character and moral temperament, and the diminished inducements it would leave for seeking the pleasures and dissipations of life, into which young men are too apt to be led. 'My good Sir,' replied Mr Morris, 'you argue the matter so handsomely, and point out so clearly the advantages of being without legs, that I am almost tempted to part with the other.'

To another person, who visited him on the same occasion, and gave utterance to his feelings of sympathy and regret, he replied; 'O, Sir, the loss is much less than you imagine; I shall doubtless be a *steadier* man with one leg than with two.'

A plain wooden leg, or what was scarcely more than a rough stick properly fitted to the limb, was the remedy for this loss, and he soon acquired such a facility in its use, that it gave him little trouble, either in walking or in other movements of his body. After he arrived in Europe, he saw people walking about with cork legs, and making a figure as he conceived so much more graceful than his limb of oak, that he resolved to try the experiment. A leg maker was sent for, and various contrivances fabricated, but he found fault with them all, and, after a short trial, he dismissed the artist and his cork inventions, and returned to the simplicity of his original substitute, which he never again laid aside. On one occasion he asked a favor for his wooden leg, which was readily granted, although a serious encroachment on court etiquette; and this was, that when he should be introduced to the King of France, as Minister from the United States, he should be allowed to appear without a sword.

The following extracts from a letter to Mr Jay, who was then at Madrid as Minister from the United States to Spain, contain opinions respecting the navigation of the Mississippi. Congress were much divided on that subject, but the majority were not inclined to insist on the right of navigation, provided

such a demand should be a decided bar against any treaty or arrangement with Spain, by which that power should be led to aid the United States in the war. Mr Morris was among that number.

'We stand in need of assistance, and you must procure it. I am very sensible that Spain, under her present circumstances, cannot advance money at Madrid. She wants there the power, and everywhere the will. The difference between us appears to me absurd, in every point of view, at least on our part. Two persons contend together about the property and possessions of a third. This, under any civil or municipal law, would be absurd; surely, it is as absurd under the law of nations, unless there is a clause in that law, which declares that red men are not entitled to the same rights as white men. We ask a territory and a navigation. The territory we cannot occupy, the navigation we cannot enjoy. We cannot occupy the territory at present, or in future; at present, because we have not men; in future, because we cannot govern it. The most we can expect is, that an emigration from the whole world, whereof one hundredth or perhaps not so much shall be our descendants, will claim title under us to a part of the soil, and then set up independence. It is impossible to monopolize theorems and corollaries. The principles, which caused and which justify the present revolution, will cause and justify as many more, as time and circumstances may furnish occasion for. The question then resolves itself into this; shall we be bounded by a wilderness, or a rival nation? Reason says the former, and bids us pursue the path which leads to it. The blind avarice of dominion may propel us into another road, but it leads to ruin.

'As to the navigation of the Mississippi, everybody knows that the rapidity of the current will forever prevent ships from sailing up, however easily they may float down. Now, unless some new dragon shall be found, whose teeth, sown on the banks of the Ohio, will produce seamen, I know not where else they will be obtained to navigate ships abroad, which can

never return home. But if this navigation were as easy, and advantageous, as it is useless and impracticable, its effect would be only the sooner to dissever the ultramontane country, the sooner to dissolve all commercial connexion between us, and the sooner to produce every unhappy consequence of it. The foregoing arguments are brought to operate in a very oblique line, for the conclusion is admitted, and then comes the question, is not Spain sensible of this, and being sensible of it, why will she refuse us a right, which it is demonstrated we can never exercise? Is not this to take advantage of our distress, and to treat on principles of inequality? I may be mistaken, but I find something very futile in this question. I do not see the right, on which the whole matter turns. I discover it neither by my own reasoning, nor by those of any good writers, nor in the history of human affairs.

'We must lament, that some circumstances in our finance and policy have given colorable ground to inculpate us. What then must be the effect of our requisition on that jealous power, who has more to hope and to fear from us, than all the world besides? The faithful guarantee of our union would insure to Spain her American dominions, and our ambition or avarice would tear them away from her, and ruin us by the possession. We are poor, and Spain can serve us now; we can serve her always; our mutual interests are therefore united; they are indeed the same. Embarked in the same cause we are brethren, and the precept, "take heed that ye fall not out by the way," should be read, understood, and felt by both. The present difference is madness. Great caution on her part, and great pride on ours, which I conscientiously believe to be mistaken pride, these impede us both in the prosecution of a common object. Let me add, on the whole, that a near neighborhood is never a good neighborhood.'

In regard to what is here said of Spain, it is demonstrable, that she did not intend to treat on any terms, and Mr Jay was amused and deceived, during the two years and a half that he remained in that kingdom, by the duplicity of an artful Minis-

try, till he was called away to assist in making the peace of Paris. The records of his acts, in conducting the fruitless negotiation in Madrid, are among the fairest testimonies of his firmness, address, and talents, and are equally dishonorable to the sincerity, and disgraceful to the dignity of Spain. There were perhaps good reasons, why that cabinet should be tardy in recognising the independence of the United States, considering the circumstances of the Spanish possessions on this continent, but there was no reason, there could be none, why they should practise deceit, excite delusive hopes, and make promises with which they never intended to comply. A slender but insidious encouragement was held out, at the first stage of the revolutionary contest, enough to raise expectations and elicit confidence, which was succeeded by heartless professions and idle pretences, till the end of the war. The United States are in no degree indebted for their existence as a nation, either to the good will or good wishes of Spain, to say nothing of more substantial benefits, that would have done them infinite service in their time of need.

CHAPTER XIV.

ORGANIZATION OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS IN CONGRESS.—ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.—ROBERT MORRIS, AT THE HEAD OF THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT.—GOUVERNEUR MORRIS ASSISTANT FINANCIER.—BANK OF NORTH AMERICA.—NEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEGOTIATING PEACE.—MR. MORRIS'S OPINIONS RESPECTING THEM.—FIRST SECRETARY OF WAR.—M. RENDON.

THE manner of transacting the various forms of government in Congress by committees, adopted at first from necessity, and continued because it was difficult afterwards to effect a change, became at length so complicated and perplexing, as to demand serious attention and a speedy remedy. Congress

exercised at the same time legislative and executive powers; they passed resolves in their capacity of representatives, and executed them by committees chosen from their own numbers. This mode introduced a multiplicity of affairs, and a pressure of business, suited neither to regularity nor despatch. The committees were in a measure irresponsible bodies; much was left undone, and more was done imperfectly. This remark applies with particular force to the foreign affairs and finance, each of which required great ability, as well as the undivided care of an individual officer, for its proper management.

These evils were early perceived by Congress, and they grew more and more apparent daily. Much time was expended in discussing the subject of a new arrangement, but the workings of party spirit, the interested views of some members, the doubts, and fears, and divided opinions of others, caused delays injurious to the public welfare. It was finally resolved to institute a department of Foreign Affairs, and three civil executive departments, that is, of Finance, War, and Marine, with a Secretary at the head of each.

While the subject was under discussion in Congress, the qualifications necessary in the persons who should fill these offices, naturally became a topic of general interest and inquiry. At this time Mr Morris wrote the following sketch.

'To determine who should be appointed Minister either of the Finances, of War, of the Marine, or of Foreign Affairs, may be difficult; but it may not be so difficult to determine the qualities requisite for each of these departments, and having thereby established a rule, the proper persons will be more easily ascertained. These qualities will be classed under the different heads of genius, temper, knowledge, education, principles, manners, and circumstances.

'Our Minister of the Finances should have a strong understanding, be persevering, industrious, and severe in exacting from all a rigid compliance with their duty. He should possess a knowledge of mankind, and of the culture and commerce, produce and resources, temper and manners of the dif-

ferent States; habituated to business on the most extensive scale, particularly that which is usually denominated *money matters;* and, therefore, not only a regular bred merchant, but one who has been long and deeply engaged in that profession. At the same time, he should be practically acquainted with our political affairs, and the management of public business; warmly and thoroughly attached to America, not bigoted to any particular State; and his attachment founded not on whim, caprice, resentment, or a weak compliance with the current of opinion, but on a manly and rational conviction of the benefits of independence, his manners plain and simple, sincere and honest, his morals pure, his integrity unblemished; and he should enjoy general credit and reputation, both at home and abroad.

'Our Minister of War should have a mind penetrating, clear, methodical, comprehensive, joined with a firm and indefatigable spirit. He should be thoroughly acquainted with the soldiery, know the resources of the country, be most intimately informed of the geography of America, and the means of marching and subsisting armies in every part of it. He should be taken from the army, and have acted at some time or other as a quartermaster general, if not as a commander in a separate department. He should be attached to the civil head of the empire, and not envious of the glory of others, but ambitious of honest fame; his manners those of a generous soldier, and not of an intriguing politician; disagreeable to no considerable body or denomination of men, and by all means agreeable to the commander in chief.

'A Minister of the Marine should be a man of plain good sense, and a good economist, firm but not harsh; well acquainted with sea affairs, such as the construction, fitting, and victualing of ships, the conduct and manœuvre on a cruise and in action, the nautical face of the earth, and maritime phenomena. He should also know the temper, manners, and disposition of sailors; for all which purposes it is proper, that he should have been bred to that business, and have followed it,

in peace and in war, in a military, and commercial capacity. His principles and manners should be absolutely republican, and his circumstances not indigent.

'A Minister of Foreign Affairs should have a genius quick, lively, penetrating; should write on all occasions with clearness and perspicuity; be capable of expressing his sentiments with dignity, and conveying strong sense and argument in easy and agreeable diction; his temper mild, cool, and placid; festive, insinuating, and pliant, yet obstinate; communicative, and yet reserved. He should know the human face and heart, and the connexions between them; should be versed in the laws of nature and nations, and not ignorant of the civil and municipal law; should be acquainted with the history of Europe, and with the interests, views, commerce, and productions of the commercial and maritime powers; should know the interests and commerce of America, understand the French and Spanish languages, at least the former, and be skilled in the modes and forms of public business; a man educated more in the world, than in the closet, that by use, as well as by nature, he may give proper attention to great objects, and have proper contempt for small ones. He should be attached to the independence of America, and the alliance with France, as the great pillars of our politics; and this attachment should not be slight and accidental, but regular, consistent, and founded in strong conviction. His manners gentle and polite; above all things honest, and least of all things avaricious. His circumstances and connexions should be such, as to give solid pledges for his fidelity; and he should by no means be disagreeable to the Prince, with whom we are in alliance, his Ministers, or subjects.'

The two important departments were those of foreign affairs and finance. Robert R. Livingston, the early and intimate friend of Mr Morris, was appointed to the former. Whether he came up in all respects to the portrait drawn above, it would be inapposite to inquire. It may be affirmed, however, that he filled the office with dignity, and executed its duties with

ability, promptness, and complete success. Congress were divided in his election. There was a party for Arthur Lee, but whoever has attended to that Commissioner's correspondence in France, and has witnessed there the exhibitions of his mind and temper, must think it a fortunate circumstance for the public, that so important a station was reserved for a person possessing other and very different qualities. To talents of a high order, and a cool judgment, Mr Livingston added zeal, energy, and a facility in affairs, not often combined in the same individual. He remained at the head of this department till the war was over, a position novel in its character, and difficult in its complicated relations, but sustained in a manner that reflects equal honor upon his patriotism and discretion, his discernment as a statesman, and his integrity as a faithful and efficient officer.

But whatever may have been thought, in regard to the candidates suitable for the other departments, there was but one opinion in Congress and in the nation, as to the proper person for taking charge of the finances, then in a dilapidated and most deplorable condition. The public sentiment everywhere pointed to Robert Morris, whose great experience and success as a merchant, his ardor in the cause of American liberty, his firmness of character, fertility of mental resources, and profound knowledge of pecuniary operations, qualified him in a degree far beyond any other person for this arduous and responsible station. There is no doubt, that he was the original in the eye of the writer, when he sketched the above traits of a minister of finance.*

---

* Robert Morris was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and a warm advocate for that measure after it was established, though, with some other true and tried patriots of that day, he considered the time at which it was done premature and inappropriate. On the twenty seventh of October, 1777, he wrote to General Gates as follows.

'Mr Johnson, and, indeed, all the other Maryland delegates, are at

After his appointment by Congress, there was a little difficult in arranging the details of his office, and some scrupulous members hesitated in yielding him the powers he required. He well knew, that unless he could act with decision and authority, he could effect nothing, which would satisfy general expectation, or enable him to execute his designs. For his own security, therefore, as well as for the public good, he demanded that the choice of all officers, who were in any way connected with his department, and for whose conduct he was at least indirectly responsible, should be in himself, and their removal at his discretion. This was a startling proposition to those prudent members of Congress, who were always looking for the downfall of the republic to the ambitious aims of its leaders, and whose dreams were peopled with the phantoms of tyrants made giddy by the intoxicating draught of power. The army

---

home, forming a Constitution. This seems to be the present business of all America, except the army. It is the fruit of a certain premature declaration, which you know I always opposed. My opposition was founded on the evil consequences I foresaw, or thought I foresaw, and the present state of several of the colonies justifies my apprehension. We are disputing about liberties, privileges, posts, and places, at the very time we ought to have nothing in view, but the securing of those objects, and placing them on such a footing, as to make them worth contending for amongst ourselves hereafter. But, instead of that, the vigor of this and several other States is lost in intestine divisions; and, unless this spirit of contention is checked by some other means, I fear it will have a baneful influence on the measures of America.

'Nothing do I wish for more than a peace, on terms honorable and beneficial to both countries; and I am convinced it is more consistent with the interest of Great Britain to acknowledge our independence, and enter into commercial treaties with us, than to persist in attempting to reduce us to unconditional submission. I hope we shall never be reduced to such a vile situation, whilst a true friend of America and freedom exists. Life would not be worth having, and it is better to perish by the sword, than to drag out our remaining days in misery and scorn; but I hope Heaven has better things in store for the votaries of such a cause.'

suffered throughout the war from this trembling timidity of the civil fathers, this fearful distrust of the strength of purpose and self-control of the leading agents of their will. In the examples of other times and countries, it is true, they had read monitory lessons, and they felt themselves more safe in caution than confidence. Within certain bounds, this was wise. The fault was in narrowing the bounds, and curtailing powers, till effort was cramped and great ends often defeated. Good sense got the better of suspicion, however, in the case of Robert Morris, and conceded, although by a tardy acquiescence, the terms he required.

As soon as Congress had made provision for an assistant officer in his department, he wrote the following letter to Gouverneur Morris.

'Office of Finance, July 6th, 1781.

'Dear Sir,

'The cheerful manner in which you agreed to render me the assistance I solicited, soon after my appointment to the superintendency of the Finances of the United States, gave me great pleasure on my own account, and a still more solid satisfaction on account of my country. Depending solely on myself, I trembled at the arduous task I had reluctantly undertaken; aided by your talents and abilities I feel better courage, and dare indulge the fond hope, that, uniting our utmost exertions in the service of our country, we may be able to extricate it from the present embarrassments, and dispel those only clouds, that seem to hang destructive over it.

'The honorable Congress, by their act of this date, have fixed a salary for the assistant, whom I may appoint, agreeable to the powers annexed to my office by a former act of Congress. My entire conviction of the great and essential services, which your genius, talents, and capacity enable you to render to your country, and of that aid, ease, and confidence you can and will administer to my own exertions and feelings, never left me one moment to hesitate about the choice I should make. I only lament, that the provision allowed by Congress

is not more adequate to your deserts, but as I know you are incapable of mercenary views and considerations, this circumstance shall be overlooked for the present, in expectation that the utility of our measures may draw a proper attention from those, who employ us. At any rate we will have the consolation to pursue the interest of the United States to the best of our judgment and abilities, whether we meet with suitable rewards or not.

'Therefore, it is with the utmost satisfaction, that I do hereby appoint you assistant to the Superintendent of the Finances of the United States of North America, and I do assure you, that nothing will make me more happy, than to acquire and divide with you the thanks of our country, and applause of the world; for I am, with esteem and affection, your sincere friend and obedient servant,

'Robert Morris.'

In his reply Mr Morris observes; 'you estimate my talents more highly than they deserve, but such as they are, my country may command them. Greatly to curtail salaries is a false economy, because it brings men into office, who are incapable of the duties, or unworthy of confidence. On the present occasion, I am not sorry the allowance is so moderate. I will demonstrate, that the partiality of friendship has not influenced your choice, nor the motives of interest induced my acceptance.' Immediately after the date of these letters, he entered publicly upon the duties of his office. Indeed, he had been performing the same duties for about two months, ever since the Superintendent took charge of his post. He wrote to Mr Jay;—'Finance, my friend, the whole of what remains of the American revolution grounds there. The States begin more and more to see the necessity of complying with the requisitions of Congress. This is good. Congress will by necessity be pressed to something like urgency and vigor. This is also good. But necessity is a severe preceptor and sometimes spoils the scholar. However, on this subject I will be silent.'

The salary allowed for the services of the Assistant Financier was eighteen hundred and fifty dollars a year. *

One of the first acts of the Superintendent of Finance was to propose the plan of a bank; which was incorporated by Congress under the name of the *Bank of North America.* Mr Gouverneur Morris says in a letter to a friend, written not long before his death, 'the first bank in this country was planned by your humble servant.' By this he probably meant, that he drew up the plan of the bank, and the observations accompanying it, which were presented to Congress, and not that he individually originated the scheme. This was doubtless matured in conjunction with the Superintendent. A warm friendship had existed between them for some time, which it may be presumed was increased by a similarity in their turn of mind for financial pursuits. To Hamilton, also, may properly be ascribed a portion of the merit in forming this bank. About two weeks before the plan was sent to Congress, Hamilton wrote a letter to Robert Morris, enclosing an elaborate project for a bank. In a letter acknowledging the reception of this paper the Financier speaks of it with commendation. He says, 'I have read your performance with that attention, which it justly deserves, and finding many parts of it to coincide with my own opinions on the subject, it naturally strengthened that confidence, which every man ought to possess to a certain degree in his own judgment.' He then tells him, that he shall communicate it to the directors of the bank, to aid them in their deliberation on certain points, which it was not thought expedient to embrace in the plan itself, particularly that of interweaving a security with the capital.

This bank had an extraordinary effect in restoring public

---

* It may be worth while here to remark, that there was no relationship of family between Robert Morris and Gouverneur Morris; at least none which could be traced by them. Robert Morris was born in England, and came to America when he was thirteen years old, his father having emigrated some time before.

and private credit in the country, and was of immense utility in aiding the future operations of the Financier, although it was begun with the small capital of four hundred thousand dollars. Hamilton's project contemplated a vastly larger sum, in which Mr Morris agreed with him, but its immmediate success on so large a scale was doubtful, and if it failed in the outset, it could not be revived; whereas, by beginning with a small capital, and establishing a credit with the public gradually, it would be easy afterwards to increase the amount, and in the end all needful advantages would be derived, to the utmost extent of banking facilities.*

During the three years and a half, in which Mr Morris acted as Assistant Financier, he was so closely devoted to the affairs of that department, that his life afforded few incidents of much biographical interest. From fragments which remain it would appear, that his correspondence was kept up with a good deal of regularity, but he was so negligent at that time in retaining copies of his letters, and preserving papers, that I have not succeeded in gathering many particulars illustrative of his doings or opinions. A few brief memorandums of causes, and heads of arguments, which still exist, indicate that he was occasionally engaged in the business of his profession, notwithstanding his financial duties. Just before his appointment as assistant, he went to head quarters on a mission to confer with General Washington, respecting supplies for the army, which Robert Morris had undertaken to provide in a time of great distress, by pledging his own credit, a rare and lofty proof of patriotism, exhibited by him on more occasions than one to relieve the pressing wants of his country.

About this time, Congress appointed four additional Commissioners for negotiating peace, to be joined with Mr Adams,

---

* The Plan of this Bank may be seen in the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, Vol. vii. p. 444. The Bank did not go into actual operation for the transaction of business, till January 3d, 1782. See Vol. xii. p. 76.

who had already been sent out for that purpose. There was a clause in the instructions, which, although approved by a large majority of Congress, was much disrelished by others, and considered derogatory to the national dignity. The Commissioners were directed to 'undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace, or truce, without the knowledge and concurrence of the French cabinet, and ultimately to govern themselves by their advice and operation.' This condescension to France, and submission to the will and guidance of her Ministers, in the all important affair of treating for peace, were looked upon as a token of humiliation unworthy of the spirit of an independent nation, and not to be justified by any ties of alliance, or any debt of gratitude. Mr Jay was one of the new Commissioners, and, in writing to him immediately after the instructions had passed through Congress, Mr Morris uttered his opinions on the subject freely and forcibly.

'Although I believe myself thoroughly acquainted with you, yet I cannot tell whether I ought to congratulate or condole with you on your late appointment. Ere this reaches you, you will have learnt, that you are on the part of this country one of the Commissioners for negotiating a peace. So far is well, but when you come to find by your instructions, that you must ultimately obey the dictates of the French Ministers, I am sure there is something in your bosom, that will revolt at the servility of the situation. To have relaxed on all sides, to have given up all things, might easily have been expected from those minds, which, softened by wealth and debased by fear, are unable to gain and unworthy to enjoy the blessings of freedom. But that the proud should prostitute the very little dignity this poor country was possessed of, would be indeed astonishing, if we did not know the near alliance between pride and meanness.

'Men, who have too little spirit to demand of their constituents that they do their duty, who have sufficient humility to beg a paltry pittance at the hands of any and every sovereign such men will always be ready to pay the prices, which vanity

shall demand from the vain. Do I not know you well enough to believe, that you will not act in this new capacity? I think I do, and therefore I will express my concern, that you must decline the proffered honor, if that name can indeed be applied to such an office. Decline it, however, with decency and dignity. I mean always if no alteration shall take place, which, if I can effect it, shall be done, though I almost despair.'

Mr Jay and the other Commissioners accepted their appointments, nevertheless, and no change was made in the instructions, but they took care to quiet the clamors of conscience, and save the wounded dignity of their country, by breaking them as soon as they came to act. They cut the Gordian knot in the way, in which all such knots are usually cut. In this they did partly right and partly wrong. They did right to act for themselves, and on their own responsibility, and make as good a treaty as they could; they did wrong in signing the treaty without the knowledge and concurrence of their friends and allies, who were still their friends, and wished them all the success they could gain, in spite of their jealousies, suspicions, and surmises. But this is trenching on the ground of history, a task more fitting to be pursued on some other occasion than the present.

The appointment of a secretary at war was deferred for some months after those of the finance department and of foreign affairs. Mr Morris wrote to General Greene, urging him to be a candidate for the office, or at least to accept it if appointed. But he declined on various grounds, though it would seem, from the following letter, that Mr Morris did not think his determination had been unalterably fixed.

'Philadelphia, December 24th, 1781.

'Dear Sir,

'Lincoln is our Minister of War, and the election to that office has been to you most honorable, for all agreed that you were the proper person, and nothing prevented your unanimous appointment, but an opinion almost as unanimous, that, if recalled from your command, you could not be replaced.

That you were not chosen I do truly lament, for I can with great truth assure you, that I know not a man who is in my opinion equal to the office except yourself. It is, however, much consolation to me, that General Lincoln is an honest and a sensible man, and, what is also of importance, that he is an industrious man. These are qualities, which will make him a good Minister, if not a great one, and these qualities will go far towards restoring or rather creating that order and regularity, without which a Minister of the most superior genius and talents would be only a lion in the toils, and be the sooner exhausted in proportion to his superior strength and more vigorous struggles.

'I shall not now attempt to remove your obstacles to the acceptance, though it is right that they should not weigh with you too heavily, because it is not impossible that your country may still call you from the field to serve in the cabinet. I cannot, however, omit the present opportunity of lodging in the bosom of friendly confidence my sentiments of our interior political situation. That Congress have not proper powers I see, I feel, and I lament. Their Ministers have the arduous task before them to govern without power, nay, more, to obtain the power necessary to govern. They must persuade where others command, and the strong phalanx of private interest, with the impetuous sallies of private politics and party, encounters them at every step.

'These features of our character and situation are very disagreeable, but are not these the distinguishing marks of government in its infancy, in every age and in every clime? To reinforce the reasonings, to impress the arguments, and to sweeten the persuasions of the public servants, we have that great friend to sovereign authority, a foreign war. Conviction goes but very slowly to the popular mind, but it goes. The advantages of union and decision in carrying on a war, the disadvantages, which flow from the want of them, the waste, the expense, and inefficacy of disjointed efforts over the face of an immense region, the incompetency of determining what is best for the whole through thirteen different communities,

whose rulers are yet ignorant of what is best even for the single one which they govern; these, with the thousand others, which it is hardly in language to enumerate or in genius to conceive, or in anything but experience to show, these must at last induce the people of America, if the war continues, to entrust proper powers to the American sovereign, as they have already compelled that sovereign reluctantly to relinquish the administration, and entrust to their Ministers the care of this immense republic. I say, if the war continues, or if it does not continue, I have no hope, no expectation, that the government will acquire force; and I will go further, I have no hope, that our union can subsist, except in the form of an absolute monarchy, and this does not seem to consist with the taste and temper of the people. The necessary consequence, if I am right, is, that a separation must take place, and consequently wars, for near neighbors are very rarely, if ever, good neighbors. But all political reasonings are liable to very great uncertainty, and it is only the Supreme Intelligence, who can determine sufficiently, even on facts to ground reasonings. Still, our conduct must be swayed by our opinions, and therefore from the same attachment to the happiness of mankind, which prompted my first efforts in this revolution, I am now induced to wish, that Congress may be possessed of more, much more authority, than has hitherto been delegated to them.

'Though you are not Minister of War, you must act in some measure as such, and you will see that you are also to be a kind of financier. Indeed the distance of the Southern States, the interruptions in communications with them, the changes which take place before facts can be known here, and determinations on them transmitted from hence, all require that a man of sense and integrity should act on liberal principles, as circumstances may require. From considerations like these, I have been induced to think, that there was wisdom in leaving you where you are, and I might have agreed in opinion on that subject with other people, only I am inclined to think, that the Southern States will be evacuated.

'You have, I am convinced, very much the confidence of those States, and I rely that you will press them hard on the score of revenue. You remember the story of Archimedes, who said to the king of Syracuse, give me a place to stand on and I will move the earth. It may with great truth be said to the several States, give money to support us and we will establish your independence. With great regard and sincerity, I am yours,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

At this time there was a Spanish agent in Philadelphia, by the name of Rendon, acting in a kind of demi-official capacity, stationed there ostensibly to watch over the commerce of his countrymen, and protect them from the undue freedoms of American privateers, but in reality to keep his eye on the doings of Congress, to penetrate their designs in regard to the Mississippi country, to observe the political aspect of affairs, to collect information of various kinds, and to communicate the results of the whole to his government. Mr Rendon was a faithful agent to his employers, and were it not for the habitual insincerity of the Spanish cabinet in all their proceedings towards America, his mission might be thought to have been a token of friendship and respectful consideration. At any rate it was desirable to keep the agent in good humor, and pains were not spared to give him knowledge and fix just impressions.

On the subjects of the paper money and finance of the United States, Mr Rendon put a series of questions to Mr Morris, which he requested might receive such answers, as he could send to the King, and as would be easily understood by him and his Ministers. In his note of queries he says, 'Mr Rendon is infinitely desirous of making his Court acquainted how much America is indebted to the particular care of the Messrs Morrises, and with what is to be expected from an administration, which already enjoys so much credit.' He requests a history of American finance from the beginning of the revolution, the plan and present state of the bank, an

account of the national debt and means of paying it, and the amount of annual expenses, adding that 'Mr Morris will see how necessary it is for the King to be informed, as to the last point in particular, which will enable him to judge both of the wants and resources of America, and perhaps determine him to afford her effectual aid.'

In reply to these queries Mr Morris wrote an able paper, containing a brief but clear and forcible exposition of each topic by itself. This he could easily do, as no man in the nation had surveyed the whole ground with a more exact scrutiny, or was better informed in all its details. It is not known whether Mr Rendon sent the paper to the Spanish Cabinet as he proposed, but it is quite certain that nothing was ever heard of the 'effectual aid,' at which he had hinted. A copy was forwarded to Mr Jay, and left to his discretion for such use, as circumstances might render expedient in his negotiation.

CHAPTER XV.

MR MORRIS AND GENERAL KNOX COMMISSIONERS FOR EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.—FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES.—COUNT VERGENNES.—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR MORRIS AND GENERAL GREENE.—NEWBURGH LETTERS.—CLOSE OF THE WAR.—BRITISH COMMERCIAL RESTRICTIONS.—TRADE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND FRENCH WEST INDIA ISLANDS.

By an agreement between General Washington and Sir Henry Clinton, Commissioners were appointed to meet for the purpose of consulting on the exchange of prisoners. General Knox and Gouverneur Morris were delegated on the part of General Washington, and General Dalrymple and Andrew Elliott on that of the British commander. They met and exchanged powers at Elizabeth Town, in New Jersey, on the

31st of March, 1782. They had a wide scope of business entrusted to them, extending both to military and naval prisoners. Mr Morris wrote to the Superintendent of Finance on the first day of their meeting.

'We exchanged powers with the Commissioners of Sir Henry Clinton, viz. General Dalrymple and Andrew Elliott, this morning, and shall proceed to business tomorrow. I fancy we shall be engaged for some time, though I cannot positively determine. But you shall know, as soon as I do, the events, which may be important. With respect to the designs of the enemy on our commerce, I am as yet ignorant of them, but shall probably gain some intelligence before long. I believe you may rely that Germain and Sandwich give place to Shelburne and Howe. Clinton will, I believe, go home. As to their situation here, I think it is not yet decided among themselves.

'I have had some very free conversation on these subjects, and shall have more. If you can let me know anything very recent of English politics, I wish you to do it, as it may be useful. General Dalrymple wishes to know how the change has been operated in our finances, so as to have avoided the convulsions apprehended, which he considers as a prodigy. I tell him it is the age and country of miracles, and he will see more and greater ones ere long. I shall give him at a convenient opportunity some little details on this subject with *great candor*. He this morning asked my sentiments, as to the change in their Ministry. I told him candidly, that I had supposed Great Britain would change Ministers before they offered treaty with us, but I did not expect a change so soon, for that I really did not expect they would think of treating with us on the ground of independence as yet. This, said he, is another affair. I told him I was sorry Lord Howe was appointed, because he is a great marine officer. "It might," said he, "have done some time ago, but"—"Oh, Sir, you are still a great people, a very great people." "Why yes, if we had five or six years to bring our finances in order again, we might

perhaps still hold our rank in Europe." "You undoubtedly will, notwithstanding the loss of this country." "Why we shall be more compact."'

The Commissioners had before them three specific objects of consultation and arrangement; a cartel for the exchange of prisoners, a liquidation of all accounts for the maintenance of prisoners on both sides, and provision for their future support. Unluckily they could not agree upon any one point. The demands and terms on each side were such, as the other would not accede to, and after two weeks' deliberation they separated without having decided upon anything. The truth is, the subject had become a very delicate and a very difficult one to handle. Mutual complaints about prisoners had existed from the beginning of the war. The cruel treatment of those, who were first taken by the British in New York, had exasperated the minds of the Americans, and the detention afterwards of the Convention troops of Saratoga, as the English always insisted against the rules of war, had equally roused the indignation of the enemy. Various other incidents contributed to keep alive this feeling on both sides, and, in the mean time, the unfortunate prisoners were detained, the victims of British pride on the one hand, and American obstinacy on the other.

An intimate correspondence was still kept up between Mr Morris and Mr Jay. That Commissioner had repaired to Paris in June, and was engaged with Dr Franklin in negotiating the treaty of peace.

JOHN JAY TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

'Paris, October 13th, 1782.

'Dear Morris,

'I have received your *festina lente* letter, but wish it had been, at least partly, in cyphers. You need not be informed of my reasons for this wish, as by this time you must know, that seals are on this side of the water rather matters of decoration, than of use. It gave me nevertheless great pleasure to receive that letter, it being the first from you that had reached me, the Lord knows when; except, indeed, a few lines

covering your correspondence with a Don. I find you are industrious, and of consequence useful. So much the better for yourself, for the public, and for our friend Morris, whom I consider as the pillar of American credit.

'The King of Great Britain, by letters patent under the great seal, has authorized Mr Oswald to treat with the Commissioners of the United States of America. His first commission literally pursued the Enabling Act, and the authority it gave him was expressed in the very forms of that act, viz. to treat with the colonies, and with any or either of them, and any part of them, and with any description of men in them, and with any person whatsoever, of and concerning peace, &c.

'Had I not violated the instructions of Congress, their dignity would have been in the dust, for the French Minister even took pains not only to persuade us to treat under that commission, but to prevent the second by telling Fitzherbert that the first was sufficient. I told the Minister, that we neither could nor would treat with any nation in the world, on any other than an equal footing.

'We may, and we may not, have a peace this winter. Act as if the war would certainly continue; keep proper garrisons in your strong posts, and preserve your army sufficiently numerous and well appointed, until every idea of hostility and surprise shall have completely vanished.

'I am, dear Morris, very much yours,

'JOHN JAY.'

Mr Jay's well known impressions, respecting the motives of the French Cabinet in the treaty of peace, are strongly hinted in this letter. The form of Mr Oswald's commission was indeed faulty, and ought to have been disapproved by the American Commissioners, as it was both by Mr Jay and Dr Franklin, but it must be remembered, that it was the form only, and not the substance, which was objected to. Mr Oswald was authorized to negotiate with the American Commissioners a treaty of peace, which was virtually acknowledging them to

represent an independent power. This was Mr Adams's view of the subject, when he wrote from Holland to Dr Franklin a short time before; 'If they make a treaty of peace with the United States of America, this is acknowledgment enough for me.' But Mr Jay insisted, that the commission should be so worded, as to imply an express acknowledgment of independence, before they proceeded to treat. This was fair, it was what the Commissioners might justly demand, it was due to the dignity of their country; but the question was, whether it would be advisable to interrupt the negotiation at the outset, and perhaps endanger its progress, by a punctilious regard for mere forms. Count Vergennes thought not; he considered, like Mr Adams, the act of treating to be an avowed acknowledgment of independence, and he advised the Commissioners to make everything secure, by introducing proper articles into the treaty itself, and fixing bounds to further claims and pretensions.

It was a harsh censure upon the French Minister, to charge him with a design to degrade the dignity of the American nation, or to put obstacles in the way of their independence. It was a censure, which, however justified by appearances or suspicion at the time, is neither borne out nor in any degree sustained by more recent and exact investigations. And, indeed, nothing could be less probable in itself. France, it is well known, went into the war for the sole object of severing America from England, and she came out of it with no other gain, than the independence of the United States. In all the secret overtures for a separate treaty, that were made to Count Vergennes, (and they were several) by emissaries from the British Court during the war, he invariably insisted on the recognition of American independence as a preliminary step. When Russia and Austria proposed to mediate between England and France, Count Vergennes accepted the offer, but imposed as a condition, that commissioners should be admitted from the United States, and take part as the representatives of an independent power in the negotiations for peace. He maintained

the same ground when Spain came forward as a mediator. And what is more, in a secret Convention between France and Spain, entered into a short time before the latter declared war against England, there is a clause, in which France exacts a promise from Spain not to oppose the independence of the United States.

This is a very important fact, inasmuch as it has generally been believed, by those who have doubted the sincerity of France in her professions to America, that she never desired Spain to acknowledge American independence, but had her own motives for discouraging such an act, and used her influence accordingly. The contrary is the truth, as will generally be the case, where suspicion of one's friend is made the groundwork of an opinion. In the preamble to this Convention it appears, that France used strong and pressing arguments to induce Spain to recognize the independence of the United States, and, failing in this object, she required in the first article of the instrument itself the stipulation above mentioned. Spain agreed to carry on the contest jointly with France against England, but refused to take any part directly in favor of the American States, although earnestly solicited to make common cause with her ally in all the objects of the war. *

Count Vergennes was the earliest and most decided friend America had in the French councils. The cabinet was originally divided on the subject of aiding the colonies against England, and the King was pointedly opposed to such a step. Vergennes took his position and maintained it. He brought over the King by degrees to his views. The resolution of the government was taken, and steadily pursued, till the great object was effected. The burden of the undertaking, the weight of responsibility, rested mainly on the shoulders of

* This secret Convention bears date, April 12th 1779. It was never printed. I saw the recorded copy of it in the Archives of the Office of Foreign Affairs in Paris.

Count Vergennes. A failure would have ruined him. The independence of America was an aim, upon the success of which, his reputation, his existence as a public minister, depended. He was aware of this, and adhered to his purpose steadily to the last. Whatever may be thought of Count Vergennes' talents or character as a man, of his general policy or practice as a statesman, he must ever be regarded, by those who will diligently examine the history of his ministerial career, as a true and valuable friend to the United States, and as deserving the lasting gratitude of the American people.*

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO JOHN JAY.

'Philadelphia, January 1st, 1783.

'Dear Jay,

'I have received your letter of the 13th of October, from Paris. That part of it in cypher, (relating to Oswald's commission,) I have communicated only to Mr Morris and Mr Livingston; to them, and to them only, for reasons which will be obvious to you. Your letters to Congress, for such I call those you write the Minister of Foreign Affairs, are what they ought to be, and have the effect you would wish. You should remember, however, that the back lands are as important in the eyes of some, as the fisheries are in those of others. Men are forgetful, and therefore it will be well by timely declarations of your sentiments to recall your

* See a further examination of this subject in the North American Review, No. lxvi. pp. 15—25; No. lxvii. pp. 454—511;—No. lxxiii. pp. 449—484. Also in the Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution, Vol. viii. p. 208.

Mr Jefferson speaks as follows of the Count de Vergennes. 'He had the reputation with the diplomatic corps, of being wary and slippery in his diplomatic intercourse; and so he might be with those, whom he knew to be slippery and double-faced themselves. As he saw that I had no indirect views, practised no subtleties, meddled in no intrigues, pursued no concealed object, I found him as easy, as frank, as easy of access to reason, as any man with whom I had ever done business. *Jefferson's Writings, Vol. i. p.* 52.

conduct while in Congress. You and I differ about the western country, but you and your sovereign are of the same opinion.

'General Mc Dougall, Colonel Brooks of the Massachusetts, and Colonel Ogden of the Jersey line, are now here, with a petition to Congress from the army for pay. The army are now disciplined, and their wants as to food and clothing are relieved, but they are not paid. Their back accounts are not settled. If settled, the balances are not secured by competent funds. No provision is made for the half-pay promised them. Some persons, and indeed some States, pretend to dispute their claim to it. The army have swords in their hands. You know enough of the history of mankind to know much more than I have said, and possibly much more than they themselves yet think of. I will add, however, that I am glad to see things in their present train. Depend on it, good will arise from the situation to which we are hastening. And this you may rely on, that my efforts will not be wanting. I pledge myself to you on the present occasion, and although I think it probable, that much of convulsion will ensue, yet it must terminate in giving to government that power, without which government is but a name.

'Accept my sincere wishes, that the year now commencing may prove to you and yours the kind dispenser of every human felicity. All your friends are well, and rejoice that you are in a situation so essential to America, as that which you now hold. Some persons have hinted to me, that you are too suspicious. I think they are much mistaken. The observation, if it proceeds from the heart, shows only that they are not so well acquainted with human nature as you are. Go on, my good friend, continue to merit the esteem of all good men, and give to envy her favorite food. When you are tired of Europe, and have completed your business there, I will invite you, in the language of Shenstone,

> "Come, come, my friend, with taste, with genius blest,
> Ere age impair thee, and ere gold allure."

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

Mr Johnson, in his Life of General Greene, has advanced two or three charges against the opinions and character of Gouverneur Morris, which it seems proper to notice as we go along. The friendship and confidence, that subsisted between Morris and Greene, induced them to correspond without reserve on subjects of the greatest political moment. Of this fact the reader has already been apprized. Two more letters will here be inserted.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO GENERAL GREENE.

'Philadelphia, February 15th, 1783.

'Dear Sir,

'I cannot omit so good an opportunity of communicating to you my thoughts on the present situation of affairs. Knowing as I do, that your heart is actuated by the same principles of justice, and the same sentiments of policy, which, influence my own, I can venture on a freedom of communication which, to most men, would be imprudent. The approach of peace cannot but give very serious thoughts to every officer and soldier of the American army. The promises made by the public will, if performed, be of beneficial importance, and, if broken, extremely injurious. The main army have had anxieties on this subject; and though I do not pretend to guess precisely their sentiments, I am convinced they will not easily forego their expectations. Their murmurs, though not loud, are deep; and I do not think that the committee they have sent hither will, from their report, allay the apprehensions which were excited.

'From this committee, however, I learn that they were precipitating themselves in the road to ruin. I mean by pursuing a recommendation to the several States for compensation. This, which would have divided them into thirteen different parts, would have made it easy to elude the force of their applications, or, after their compliance, to have resumed any grants made in consequence of them, when the army should have been disbanded. At present, however, the committee have become so thoroughly persuaded, that the army will be de-

frauded, unless they unitedly pursue a common object, that I believe it will soon become the general sentiment. If the army, in common with all other public creditors, insist on the grant of general permanent funds for liquidating all the public debts, there can be little doubt that such revenues will be obtained; and there can be no doubt, that, when they are obtained, they will afford to every order of public creditors a solid security. The half-pay promised the officers is estimated to be worth five and a half years' full pay in hand.

'Admitting, then, that the proper revenues were obtained, the officer would be able always to sell his stock for the value. It is needless to say, that the United States have no other mode of paying the arrearages due to the army. It is also unnecessary to mention, that this kind of provision ought to be made for debts of every description. The effect of it, in all its parts, you will, I am sure, be at no loss to trace; and you will agree with me in opinion, that Congress can, by that means, obtain a degree of influence essential to the happiness of this country. Now, my dear Sir, I am most perfectly convinced, that, with the due exception of miracles, there is no probability that the States will ever make such grants, unless the army be united and determined in the pursuit of it; and unless they be firmly supported, and as firmly support the other public creditors. That this may happen must be the entire wish of every intelligently just man, and of every real friend to our glorious revolution.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

GENERAL GREENE TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

'Charleston, April 3d, 1783.

'Dear Sir,

'The subject of your letter by Major Edwards is important to the public, and interesting to the army. The disposition of the latter here is much the same as it is to the northward, but I am afraid of both. When soldiers advance without authority, who can halt them? We have many Clodiuses

and Catilines in America, who may give a different direction to this business, than either you or I expect. It is a critical business, and pregnant with dangerous consequences. Congress are fast declining, and their power and authority must expire, without more effectual support. What this may produce, time will manifest. I have done my duty, and wait events.

'I wrote a letter to the Governor of this State on the subject of finance, and the discontents of the army. It gave some alarm and much disgust. Continental authority and the financier are looked upon with a jealous eye here. No people were ever more blind to their true interest. Time and further experience will produce what reason and persuasion cannot. I send you a copy of my letter to the Assembly, and a couple of papers with some strictures thereon. More will be said upon the subject hereafter. Plain dealing will soon become necessary.

'Within a day a report prevails that Mr Morris will resign in May. Public credit will receive a fatal stab should it take place. No more bills can be negotiated, and I expect the contractor will decline the business. How we are to be supported I cannot imagine. Every mind seems to be impressed with a kind of awful suspense. The doubts upon war and peace, the hopes and fears in matters of revenue, the discontents of the army, and the consequences that all these may produce upon our own internal policy, and in the measures of British administration, must fill every mind, which feels for the tranquillity of this country, with no small anxiety. Most part of the force in this quarter will march northwardly in about a fortnight. I am, &c.

'Nathanael Greene.'

From two of Mr Morris's letters to General Greene, printed above, Mr Johnson infers, first, that he was the author of the celebrated Newburgh letters, or addresses; and secondly, that he was an advocate for an absolute monarchy, and wished to establish such a system in America by an improper use of the army.

As to the first charge, it has been happily put to rest by General Armstrong, who has declared himself the author of the Addresses, and that he wrote them at Newburgh, in General Gates's quarters, at the request of several officers, he being a Major in the army of the United States, and aid to General Gates. Here then is an end of this matter.*

To those, who have read Mr Morris's letters, on which Mr Johnson relies for his proofs of the second charge, very little needs be said to show, that his deductions are not well sustained. Most persons indeed would infer the contrary. So far from exhibiting any evidence, that he was a friend of monarchy, and wished to set up such a form of government in the United States, Mr Morris expresses his fears, that such a calamity would be the consequence of the disordered condition of the country, particularly in regard to the finances, unless some powerful and speedy remedy should be applied. So little power was lodged in the hands of Congress, and so little influence possessed by that Assembly over the States, that when the pressure of a foreign war should cease to consolidate a union for mutual defence, his serious and alarming apprehensions were, that civil dissensions and a weak government would lead to their natural results, anarchy in the first instance, and monarchy in the last. There was nothing new or singular in this doctrine. It was probably the sentiment of every patriot in the nation, who looked deeply into the state of public affairs, and foresaw the impending dangers.

It would be idle to discuss this subject. All Mr Morris's writings, all his actions, vindicate him from the charge of seeking to establish a monarchy in America. It was a favorite maxim with him, as it must be with every wise man, that forms of government should be suited to the condition, character, manners, and habits of the people. In France, therefore,

---

*See an article, understood to have been written by General Armstrong, in the *United States Magazine*, for January 1, 1823, New York.

and reasoning as a Frenchman, he was a monarchist, because he believed the monarchical form the only one adapted to that nation; and from the very commencement of the revolution in that country, he predicted the inefficiency of the French Republic, and the final issue of a military despotism. This he conceived to be the natural order of things, and so it turned out. The same idea appears, where he expresses his apprehensions of a monarchy in the United States, adding that 'this does not seem to consist with the taste and temper of the people.'* His wish was, that such a plan of government should be established in America, as would be received and obeyed, secure strength from union, and prosperity and happiness from its suitableness to the social and political condition of the inhabitants.

Mr Johnson says further, that 'General Greene was not deceived by the specious affectation of disinterestedness and public spirit,' in Mr Morris's letter, and adds, 'it so happened, also, that he was fully apprized of the writer's intimate connexion with the public creditors, to a greater amount probably than any other man in the union.' This is a very grave insinuation, meaning, as I presume, that Mr Morris was improp-

---

* For some reason not given, Mr Johnson omits this clause of the letter, in the extract published by him. He quotes Mr Morris as saying, that if war does not continue, 'I have no hope, no expectation, that the government will acquire force; and I will go further, I have no hope, that our union can subsist, except in the form of an absolute monarchy,—(Here Mr Johnson stops, and cuts off the sentence in the middle, but Mr Morris goes on to say)—*and this does not seem to consist with the taste and temper of the people.*' It is evident, that this last part of the clause gives a turn to the author's ideas, essentially different from what would be derived from the former part alone.

Again it is remarkable, that the letter, in which this passage is contained, is printed by Mr Johnson *without date*, and in connexion with that of February eleventh, 1783, as if they related to the same subject, and were intended to support each other; whereas, the former was written on the twenty-fourth of December, 1781.

erly concerned in speculating projects with public creditors, and had his private ends to answer, in bringing about violent measures to operate on the government. I feel bound to declare, that I have discovered nothing in any records of Mr Morris's private or public transactions, that gives a shadow of probability to such a suspicion. There is not a glimpse of evidence, that he had any personal concern with those creditors, or took any other interest in their affairs, than what was prompted by generous motives for the public good, and desire to see justice done to all parties. He was devoted to his duties as Assistant Financier, and had no income or means, except his salary in that office. From the time he ceased to be a member of Congress, till he received his new appointment, he was supported by occasional allowances from his mother, and such precarious receipts as he derived from his profession. As yet nothing had come to him from his father's estate. Hence it is clear, if other circumstances were not conclusive, that, destitute as he was of means and of credit, he could not meddle in such deep speculating projects, and that the biographer of Greene must be mistaken on this point.

If he means by the insinuation a political intrigue, and that Morris was to be rewarded for his services in that line, the proof is equally wanting, and the thing itself still more improbable. He quotes a passage from Gordon, in which that writer says, Gouverneur Morris was *suspected* of being at the bottom of an extraordinary scheme, which was to 'throw the officers and soldiers into such a paroxysm of rage and resentment, as should drive them into an attempt of compelling Congress to comply with their own demands, and those of the public creditors, who were to arm and join them.' This description itself is too ludicrous to require a formal reply, and it is enough to add, that Gordon suspected many things, which never happened, as he wrote many things not worth recording.

There is a letter from General Knox to Mr Morris on this subject, written but a few days before the Newburgh addresses appeared, in reply to one brought to him by the committee

of the army, on their return from Philadelphia to camp. The letter of Mr Morris, to which this is an answer, has not been found.

'West Point, February 21st, 1783.

'My Dear Morris,

'I thank you for your kind favor of the seventh instant by Colonel Brooks. I am convinced your ideas of the general state of our affairs must be just, as they are the result of experience. The army generally have always reprobated being thirteen armies. Their ardent desires have been, to be one continental body, looking up to one sovereign. This would have prevented much heart-burning at the partialities, which have been practised by the respective States. They know of no way of bringing this about, at a period when peace appears to be in full view. Certain it is, they are good patriots and would forward everything, that would tend to produce union, and a permanent general constitution. But they are yet to be taught how their influence is to effect this matter. They may assist, but they must be directed in the mode by proper authority.

'It is a favorite toast in the army, "a hoop to the barrel," or, "cement to the union." America will have fought and bled to little purpose, if the powers of government shall be insufficient to preserve the peace, and this must be the case without general funds. As the present constitution is so defective, why do not you great men call the people together, and tell them so. That is, to have a convention of the States to form a better constitution? This appears to us, who have a superficial view only, to be the most efficacious remedy. Let something be done before a peace takes place, or we shall be in a worse situation than we were at the commencement of the war.

'Your affectionate

'H. Knox.'

The whole matter amounts to this. A certain number of gentlemen, among whom was Mr Morris, looked with much

alarm on the feeble state of the national government, and foreboded the melancholy consequences of this weakness after the peace, when a separation of interests and powers would inevitably lead to disunion and civil disorders. To prevent such a catastrophe, these gentlemen wished to secure a more solid government, while there was yet any means of effecting it. To consolidate the public debts, embracing those to the army as well as to private citizens, and to make the United States, and not the States individually, responsible for the payment of the whole mass, would be to create a bond of union more firm and durable, than could be devised in any other manner. The army was about to be disbanded, and the officers and soldiers sent home to the States to obtain their pay, or lose it, according to the caprice of circumstances. Thus disappointed and left at the mercy of events, was it to be expected, that they would retain any attachment for that body of rulers, by whom, after fighting the battles of their country in the times of her greatest peril, they were now neglected and turned off? Was it to be expected, that they would cherish a single sentiment of regard for a national government, which was too weak to render justice to its servants, too low in public estimation to maintain its own dignity?

Setting aside the score of equity, therefore, and placing the subject merely on the ground of patriotism, the course pursued by Mr Morris and his coadjutors will claim approbation, rather than censure. Their design was to strengthen and perpetuate the national government, by combining as many interests as possible in its support. The army and the public creditors happened to be two large classes of citizens, respectable for their character and numbers, who had the same powerful and stimulating cause for working together in the attainment of the same end, that of procuring their just dues, and sustaining a government that could command the means of paying them. While kept up by these two pillars, the government might still hold together, and perform its functions, although tottering with premature decay in some of its parts.

Such, it is conceived, were the motives, such the efforts of those, who united (in this conspiracy as it has been called) to save the Republic from ruin.

On the seventeenth of July, Mr Jay wrote to Mr Morris from Passy,—'Orders are gone out to evacuate New York. The present British Ministry are duped, I believe, by an opinion of our not having union and energy sufficient to regulate our trade, so as to retaliate their restrictions. Our ports were opened too soon. Let us however be temperate, as well as firm.' And again on the twenty-fourth of September.

'While there are knaves and fools in the world, there will be wars in it: and that nations should make war against nations, is less surprising, than their living in uninterrupted peace and harmony. You have heard that the Ottoman and Russian empires are on the point of unsheathing the sword. The objects of the contest are more easy to discern than the issue; but if Russia should extend her navigation to Constantinople, we *may* be the better for it; that circumstance is an additional motive to our forming a treaty of commerce with her. Your commercial and geographical knowledge render it unnecessary for me to enlarge on this subject.

'But whatever we may have to do abroad, it is of little importance when compared with what we have to do at home. I am perfectly convinced that no time is to be lost in raising and maintaining a *national* spirit in America. Power to govern the confederacy, as to all general purposes, should be granted and exercised. The government of the different States should be wound up and become vigorous. America is beheld with jealousy, and jealousy is seldom idle. Settle your boundaries without delay; it is better that some improper limits should be fixed, than any left in dispute. In a word, everything conducive to union, and constitutional energy of government, should be cultivated, cherished, and protected; and all counsels and measures of a contrary complexion should at least be suspected of impolitic views and objects.

'The rapid progress of luxury at Philadelphia is a frequent

topic of conversation here, and what is a little remarkable, I have not heard a single person speak of it in terms of approbation.'

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO JOHN JAY.

'Philadelphia, September 24th, 1783.

'Dear Sir,

'The British employ themselves about the evacuation of New York, but that business goes on slowly. I am however informed from tolerable authority, that they will be gone by the beginning of November. If, as you suppose, the British Ministry imagine that we cannot retaliate their restrictions, they are deceived, for their conduct will itself give Congress a power, which they might not otherwise be possessed of. Indeed, my friend, nothing can do us so much good, as to convince the Eastern and Southern States how necessary it is to give proper force to the federal government, and nothing will so soon operate that conviction as foreign efforts to restrain the navigation of the one, and the commerce of the other.

'But for my own part, I have no desire to retaliate commercial restrictions. It is my fixed opinion, that a nation can by such restrictions do nothing more than injure herself, nor is an injury the less so because it affects more the remote members, than it does the head of an empire. The sovereign may collect and ought to have revenue from all his dominions, which are in condition to afford it, but he acts weakly, as well as wickedly, if he cramps one part of the community, that he may draw more easily the blood and juices from another part. The late prohibition to trade with the British Islands, unless in British bottoms, can do us no harm, and can do them no good. Our produce they must and will have, and if they employ half a million in carrying on the navigation at a great expense, which we should have performed at a less expense for two hundred thousand, our two hundred thousand will be left for other operations, even to speculate on their produce and our own, so as to make them pay the speculator a profit

on every gallon of rum they sell, and every barrel of flour they buy in our ports. By making the subsistence of their people in the Islands more expensive, they aid the efforts of rival nations to furnish the commodities of their Islands to others, and even to their own subjects. This kind of policy is so bad, that I am persuaded the British Ministers cannot seriously intend the prohibition, although I am equally convinced, that a regard to the national prejudices renders it unavoidable at present. I do not, therefore, think we should labor to undo what is done, but leave things a while to their own course. And as to a treaty of commerce, I think the best way is to make no treaty for some time to come, and if we tell them that we will make no treaty, they will be much more desirous of it than we ought to be.

'Mr Adams seems to be in opinion with you, as to the necessity of sending a Minister to England, as indeed he does on some other points. He will, I suppose, be the man, for sundry reasons, which I might assign, but he will have serious cause to repent of the appointment under present circumstances. Nothing would have more unfavorable effects, than to send a Minister, who should feel himself attached or opposed to any of the parties, by which that nation is rent asunder. We should hold them in equal indifference of sentiment, with equal appearance of confidence, paying to the *Ins* a respect due to their places, but which neither *Ins* or *Outs* are, or can be, entitled to on the score of their merit and virtue, at least from us. As we may not easily find a man capable of this conduct, perhaps the best Minister is no Minister, for the want of one will show, that we are not precipitate in a desire of close connexion, and that, however the old mercantile habits may have revived commercial intercourse, the government has a proper jealousy and caution. This circumstance, also, must work favorably on our politics with other powers, and give weight and dignity to the Ministers we do send. I am, &c.

'Gouverneur Morris.'

On the second of October he wrote to an American gentleman, who had lately gone to London. 'You will, I suppose, have found the government rather indisposed towards us, and by what we have seen of their conduct, it appears not improbable that, in our turn, we shall become indisposed towards them. My consolation on the present system of the European powers, is, that they will operate as a band to our union. We read fables in youth, and have not in age the temper to profit by them. Nay, we almost forget, when charged with great affairs, that it was the sun, and not the wind, which made the old man throw off his great coat. France, not liable as England is to mercantile influence in the operations of state, would be mad to imitate that imperious rival. But it is not impossible that she may be so mad, for I believe her rulers have not the best information from this quarter. I judge by the conversation of M. de Marbois, who is as much and as blindly attached to a restrictive system for their Islands, as you can easily conceive.'

From the time that there had been a prospect of peace, Mr Morris had given much attention to the subject of West India trade, and had convinced himself of the impolicy of restrictive regulations, both in regard to England and France. Indeed, when he wrote the above letter, he was engaged in drawing up a paper for the consideration of the French Minister, M. de la Luzerne, entitled, '*Ideas of an American on the Commerce between the United States and the French Islands.*' The point of his argument is, that it will be advantageous alike to France and her Islands, to leave the commerce of the latter open to the United States.

He lays it down as an axiom, that the Islands themselves must flourish, in proportion to the facility with which they can obtain the means of subsistence. Make subsistence cheap to the inhabitants, and their produce will be cheap in the same proportion, more lands will be cultivated, the population and the amount of produce increased. Hence a greater demand for the commodities of France, and the means of paying for

them ; and hence an increase to the internal wealth, revenue, and navigation of that country.

But the question occurs, whether it will be expedient for France to permit this commerce with America to be carried on in American bottoms? The advocates for restriction say no. The objection is advanced, that if the Americans are permitted to carry away the produce of the Islands for their own use, they will not be contented with the privilege to this extent, but will take away more than they want, and thus elude the commercial regulations with reference to France and her Islands, and become the sole carriers of the Islands to all parts of the world. To obviate this objection, according to the doctrine of the restrictionists, the trade between the Islands and the United States must be carried on in French bottoms only.

This doctrine is at variance with the fact, that the commerce cannot be carried on with any chance of advantage by vessels sailing from Europe to America, thence to the Islands, and thence again to Europe. Owing to the nature of the navigation among the Islands, and on the American coast, the articles from the United States must be carried in small vessels, navigated by few men. This has been proved by long experience. But this kind of craft is not suited to the commerce from the Islands to Europe, any more than the large ones are from America to the Islands. It follows, that if the Islands are to be supplied by the intervention of large vessels from Europe, the price of the supplies will be increased, and the prosperity of the Islands, and the value of their commerce to France, proportionately diminished.

This may be illustrated by an example. The produce shipped directly from America to Europe employs many more vessels, than are wanted to bring back articles from Europe to America. Two hundred large ships are required to transport the tobacco from the Chesapeake, and these two hundred are sufficient to bring the annual supplies from Europe for all America ; but tobacco does not employ more than one fifth of the shipping engaged in the commerce between America and

Europe. It follows that a large portion of the returning ships come empty. And heretofore this has been so remarkably the case, in regard to the tobacco ships, that goods have been freighted from Great Britain for a mere trifle, and sometimes for nothing.

It must be considered, also, that a voyage from France to the West Indies can be performed with great certainty in a given time, by reason of the tropical winds, but to the United States it will be more uncertain and longer. Of two vessels, therefore, sailing at the same time, one for the United States and the other for the Islands, the expenses of the former at the end of the voyage, taking into consideration the risk of the ship, the crew, repairs, and provisions, will exceed those of the latter in the amount of one fourth of the cargo, which she is to receive in the United States for the Islands, and still she has another voyage to perform before she arrives at the point of destination. The result is, that the price of supplies thus carried to the Islands, is enhanced, at least one fourth, beyond what it would be, if the same supplies were transported directly from the United States in American bottoms. This expense must be borne by the merchant, who fits out the ship, or the planter who consumes the produce, and it yields no returns to anybody.

But allow a free competition, and this expense will not be incurred at all; in other words, no merchant will send a ship from Europe to take American produce to the Islands. For the same reason, no one will send a ship from the United States to the Islands, for the purpose of taking freight there for Europe, and returning thence to America. The circle is the same, let it commence at whatever point it may. And this is a conclusive answer to the objection, that if the trade is thrown open to the Americans, they will take away more produce than their own market demands, and become the carriers from the Islands to Europe. Natural causes prevent it. Moreover, if it is hoped or expected to increase the number of French seamen, by undue restrictions on the colonial commerce, the

end will be defeated by the very means used to attain it; for, if a free trade be allowed, the produce of the Islands will become so much more abundant, that, after deducting all that can possibly be carried away by Americans, there must still remain such a surplus, as will require a great increase of French shipping to take it to Europe.

Such is a summary of the facts and reasonings used to convince the French Minister, that the restrictive policy of his government was founded on erroneous principles, and that a system of free trade, between the French West India Islands and the United States, would be mutually advantageous to the two nations.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR MORRIS VISITS MORRISANIA AFTER THE PEACE.—ILLUMINATION IN PHILADELPHIA.—HIS ARGUMENTS FOR THE BANK OF NORTH AMERICA.—CONDITION OF THE TORIES.—COMMERCIAL RESTRICTIONS.—M. DE CHASTELLUX.—PAMPHLET ON THE BANK.—MR MORRIS'S PLAN OF A NEW COINAGE.—PURCHASES THE ESTATE OF MORRISANIA.

The preliminary articles of peace having been signed, and hostilities suspended, Mr Morris returned to New York, and visited his mother at Morrisania, after an absence of almost seven years. He writes to Mr Robert Morris; 'I arrived at this place last evening, in company with my uncle, and after making a dinner at six o'clock we drank your health in Cape wine, which has stood on a shelf in this house twenty years to my knowledge, and how much longer I know not. We will drink no more of it, but leave the remnant till you and Mrs Morris can accompany me hither.' He reached home in season to advise and assist his mother, in presenting her claims for depredations committed at Morrisania by the British army during the war. The estate was within the British lines, and

when the army first came to New York, they took from it sixty-five head of horned cattle, ninety four sheep, and other provisions, and in the course of the war, the timber had been cut on four hundred and seventy acres of woodland, and used for various purposes of ship-building, artillery, and fire-wood. Colonel de Lancey's regiment of refugees was also stationed there, for nearly two years, erected above seventy huts in which they dwelt, cultivating the land in the mean time, and cutting the wood for fuel.

Papers and affidavits certifying all these particulars, with estimates of the damages, were presented to the British board of claims, who examined them, and reported that the facts were proved and the charges reasonable, and that, as the timber and other articles had been used in his Majesty's service, the claimant ought to be paid to the full amount of her demands. It is but just to add, that the records of these transactions show the British commander, and the other officers concerned, to have acted apparently on principles honorable and generous. The claim, amounting to more than eight thousand pounds, was sent to England and entrusted for collection to General Staats Long Morris, but it was not paid during Mrs Morris's lifetime.

The war being now over, Mr Morris retired from the office of Assistant Fnancier, and betook himself anew to the practice of the law, which indeed he had never entirely given up. It was his intention at first to return to New York, and establish himself in that city, but various ties of business kept him in Philadelphia, which may be considered his permanent place of residence from this time till he went to Europe, five years afterwards. He was more or less associated with Robert Morris, in his mercantile affairs and other speculations, sometimes acting as his agent, at others devising plans of new adventure, voyages at sea, purchases of stocks, of lands, or any other projects, which promised successful results, good profits, and the means of accumulating property. By their long intimacy they had acquired a perfect knowledge of each other's

character, which, strengthened by a mutual confidence, enabled them to co-operate with double effect in executing the splendid schemes of enterprise, which marked the career both private and public of the great American financier.

Mr Morris's correspondence with his friends was still continued, though with less frequency and less point, as the topics of keen excitement after the peace were diminished in number and interest. To Mr Jay, who was still in Europe, he wrote on the tenth of January, 1784.

'I was lately in New York, and have the pleasure to tell you, that all your friends were well. Things there are now in that kind of ferment, which was rationally to be expected, and I think the superior advantages of our constitution will now appear, in the repressing of those turbulent spirits, who wish for confusion, because in the regular order of things they can only fill a subordinate sphere.

'This country has never yet been known to Europe, and God knows whether it ever will be so. To England it is less known, than to any other part of Europe, because they constantly view it through a medium either of prejudice or of faction. True it is, that the general government wants energy, and equally true it is, that this want will eventually be supplied. A national spirit is the natural result of national existence, and although some of the present generation may feel colonial oppositions of opinion, yet this generation will die away and give place to a race of Americans. On this occasion, as on others, Great Britain is our best friend, and by seizing the critical moment when we were about to divide, she has shown clearly the dreadful consequences of division. You will find, that the States are coming into resolutions on the subject of commerce, which, if they had been proposed by Congress on the plain reason of the thing, would have been rejected with resentment and perhaps contempt.

'With respect to our taste for luxury, do not grieve about it. Luxury is not so bad a thing as it is often supposed to be, and if it were so, still we must follow the course of things, and

turn to advantage what exists, since we have not the power either to annihilate or create. The very definition of luxury is as difficult as the suppression of it, and if I were to declare my serious opinion, it is, that there is a less proportion of rogues in coaches than out of them.

'Do not condemn us till you see us. Do not ask the British to take off their foolish restrictions. Let them alone, and they will be obliged to do it of themselves. While the present regulation exists, it does us more political good, than it can possibly do commercial mischief.'

The news of the signature of the definitive treaty of peace produced in different parts of the country demonstrations of joy, in the various displays of illuminations, fire-works, shows, and the like, to which people are wont to resort in expressing their delight at any felicitous public event. Mr Morris sent to his friend Hamilton a description of the efforts in this way at Philadelphia.

'I arrived here on Thursday evening, after a mighty disagreeable ride, and a mighty whimsical accident in crossing the Delaware, the particulars of which I shall reserve till we meet. As I promised to write you the politics and news of Philadelphia, I will do it this day; for the snow storm rages so incessantly, that I cannot go abroad. This you will say bodes a long letter, and I fear you will not be mistaken.

'I would entertain you with a *splendid* account of those illuminations and fire-works, which, if we may believe the Philadelphia newspapers, were *to have been* the most brilliant imaginable, but I arrived too late, and only know by hearsay the accident, which happened to them, and which you may know too by consulting the newspapers. The exhibition would have been perfectly rediculous, but for the death of one spectator, and the wounds of others. These are subjects on which pleasantry is misplaced. I have been however to see the place, which was to have been the most splendid of all possible places, and truly if the projectors had intended to fire this city, it was as ingenious invention. Only think of a

large wooden stage, raised in the middle of a street, to hang canvass on, with a number of lamps on the inside, and no precautions against the flames. You will perhaps be curious, as I was, to know what put it into their heads. The account I received is to this effect. The quakers, who have more than one reason for not illuminating their houses, and some others who have, on this occasion, at least one reason for the same thing, wished to save both their glass and their principles. But how was this to be brought about, without offending certain persons, whose whiggism consists in abusing the tories? The President, who is said to be clever at expedients, undertook the task. In order to secure the aforesaid whigs, a man was employed to prepare decorations and devices for the triumphal arch, and to superintend the expenditure of the sum of six hundred pounds, appropriated by government to the splendid exhibition. At the same time, all illuminations were forbidden, and, by a wise foresight, *squibs* were also prohibited. This you see is the age of coalitions; and so, blessed be the peace-makers.

'A man, who arrives in this city from New York, beholds a scene as perfectly new, as if he went to the Mogul's dominions. The Philadelphians, long famous for their progress in the arts, have already completed what we have but just begun. For the violent whigs and the violent tories, who turned their backs upon everybody else about two years ago, have each performed a semicircle, and met at the opposite point. You know the present influenza is the banko-mania, and this day's newspapers give us the plan of the intended Pennsylvania, or, as some call it, Coalition Bank.'

The remainder of the long letter, with which he threatened his friend, is taken up in details about the proposed bank, and the persons designated to be the directors. This bank, by the way, caused him no little trouble and labor. It threatened to be a rival of his favorite Bank of North America. The leaders of the project petitioned the legislature of Pennsylvania for a charter. This alarmed the directors of the old

bank, and they requested to be heard before the legislature in opposition to the petitioners. Mr Morris was made their counsel and advocate, and he entered the lists in debate with those members of the Assembly, who were for granting a charter to the new bank. The contest was warm and protracted, and he made two arguments, highly applauded at the time for eloquence, ability, and the perfect knowledge of the subject, which they exhibited. It was on this occasion, that he apostrophized the shades of William Penn in a manner so extraordinary, that the heads of the audience were for the moment instinctively turned, as if to behold the ghost of the great founder of their republic entering the hall of legislation. The traditionary reminiscence of this event is still fresh in the minds of many persons in Philadelphia.

Before quoting a letter written on the eighteenth of June, 1784, to Mr Peter Van Schaack, then in London, it may be premised, that this gentleman was a refugee from New York, who had been in England several years, but had left his country under circumstances that claimed the strong sympathy of his early friends, whom the caprices and the unbending rigor of war had made his political enemies. Mr Van Schaack was in sentiment opposed to the American Revolution, but he took no part on either side. By an act of the legislature of New York, however, he was numbered among the enemies of his country, on the broad, politic, and perhaps equitable principle, that in war whoever is not a friend is an enemy. By this act he was obliged to flee from his country.

When peace was again restored, and it was no longer treasonable to be detected in writing to a tory, the correspondence between these two friends was renewed, apparently by Mr Van Schaack in a letter from London, to which the one from Mr Morris, about to be quoted, was a reply. His liberal sentiments, his humane and generous feelings, as expressed in this reply, cannot but meet with a responsive acquiescence in every benevolent heart. The contest was over, the wild horrors of war had ceased, the causes of acrimony were swal-

lowed up in the successful issue of events, and why remember any longer the errors, or even the offences of those, whom a painful experience had convinced of their waywardness, and who, in the humility of defeated expectation, or deferred repentance, now asked the slender boon of breathing their native air, and ending their days in the land that had given them existence? Magnanimity is sometimes a nobler virtue than justice, and the emotions of sympathy do more to humanize the heart, than the stern precepts of law, or the cold maxims of political expediency.

'I perfectly coincide with you in opinion,' says Mr Morris to his refugee friend, 'that America is the country in the world, whose social state admits of the greatest portion of happiness. Such being my sentiment, I have commisserated the fate of those, who are exiled from among us. My political ideas, also, are far from lessening the regret, because I see no necessity for the measure. Were this a monarchy, I would subscribe to it fully, because the reigning and the deposed families must each have hereditary friendships and antipathies among the people, but in a republic it cannot be so. The metaphysical idea of the state does not so inhere in any particular body, as to give room for an exercise of the dissocial feelings. We may love the country, though we hate the king, but it is not in nature to hate the country, nor can we long dislike the government, when that government is ourselves. With a very few exceptions, therefore, of old and powerful enemies, I would open wide the doors of that temple, which we have reared to liberty, and, in consecrating an asylum to the persecuted of mankind, I would not exclude those, who first drew the vital air, and first saw the light in America.'

Peace being established, the States began to set up new commercial regulations, and, as is natural in such cases, each had an eye to its own interests, with little regard to its neighbors, and less to its confederated head. What, with ignorance, cupidity, the love of exercising power, and the spirit of rival-

ship, things soon ran into such a state of confusion, as threatened all sorts of disasters to the republics severally, and to the Union. Pennsylvania, although staggering under the awkward burden of her ill balanced constitution, was not less venturesome in these experiments, than the other States. The merchants were little satisfied with the unpractised skill of the legislators, in their attempts at making laws for governing commerce, and mercantile affairs. Mr Morris was on their side, in some sense indeed one of their number, and the memorials, remonstrances, petitions, and recommendations, which they presented from time to time to the legislature, usually flowed from his pen.

Still continuing to give much attention to the commercial relations between France and the United States, and particularly in regard to the West India trade, he wrote two letters on that subject to the Marquis de Chastellux, which were shown to the French Ministry, and highly commended. In reply to them, December 8th, 1784, M. de Chastellux says;

'Your letters have been communicated to M. le Maréchal de Castries, Minister of Marine, who was delighted with them. He told me, and repeated it several times, that he had seen nothing superior, or more full of powerful thought, on the subject of government and politics. He gave them to many of his friends to read, and I have been importuned for permission to take copies of them, which I have granted only to those, who were worthy of it. In one word, I have been congratulated on having such a friend in another hemisphere. There is enough, my dear Morris, to content you, if self love rather than love of country had guided your pen; but your object was the good of your nation and of ours.

'Have we secured this object by the measures we have taken? I wish to have your opinion on this subject, though it would, perhaps, be easy for me to anticipate it. I do not send you the decrees of the Council, relative to your commerce with our colonies in the West Indies, because I doubt not you have received them, or that they will reach you at the same time

with this letter. You will see, that we have done more than the English, but we have done less than I wished. I was desirous that you should be permitted to take sugar, for I consider it hard to oblige you to come to Europe after ours, when you might receive it in return for such articles as we asked you to carry to our colonies. Yet notwithstanding these restrictions, the French merchants, and especially those of Bordeaux, complain bitterly. But we now know enough to make a distinction in regard to you, between the interests of commerce and those of merchants.

'I trust you will continue to communicate your opinions. They will be eagerly received here, particularly by our excellent Minister of Marine, who joins to very extensive knowledge, a love of truth, and zeal for the public good, which you republicans would be astonished to find in a monarchy, especially in a Court. Why should you not be surprised at it? We are even much surprised in this country, to see how little harmony and union reign in your rising republic; I should say your *republics;* and in employing this expression, I have perhaps explained all. I cannot dissemble with you, that the Americans do not rise in the opinion of Europeans. Till you order your confederation better, till you take measures in common to pay debts, which you contracted in common, till you have a form of government and a political influence, we shall not be satisfied with you on this side of the Atlantic. In expressing myself thus, I speak of the public in France; for what nation, unless it be our own, has at this moment any interest in seeing you become powerful?'

From January to the middle of July, 1785, he was in Virginia, employed in affairs of business for Robert Morris, embracing a settlement of accounts with several persons, and other concerns of that nature, the details of which would have few attractions for a general reader. In latter years he was accustomed to look back upon this residence in Virginia, as among the most agreeable periods of his life.

Scarcely had he returned to Philadelphia, when he was

called on again to defend the Bank of North America, a new attack having been made upon it from another quarter. Petitions, procured by party influence, were brought up to the legislature, praying for the abolition of the charter. One of the ablest performances of his pen is a pamphlet written on this occasion, developing the principles of the Bank, its proceedings, and the great benefits derived from it to the public, answering at the same time, in a close and logical series of arguments, all the objections advanced against it. With the whole, is interwoven a view of banking operations in general, and their effects on the community.

Soon after Mr Robert Morris had been placed at the head of the finance department, he was instructed by Congress to prepare a report on the foreign coins, then circulating in the United States. Accordingly, as early as January, 1782, a full exposition of this subject was made to Congress in a letter, which was officially sent in his name, but which Mr Jefferson says was written by the Assistant Financier, Gouverneur Morris. Indeed, the estimates and calculations on which the letter is founded still exist in his handwriting. But the most curious and remarkable part of this report, was a new plan for an American coinage, which originated with Gouverneur Morris, and which in fact was the basis of the system afterwards adopted and now in use. The following extracts contain the hints as they were first struck out.

'In order that a coin may be perfectly intelligible to the whole people, it must have some affinity to the former currency.' This, therefore, will be requisite in the present case. The purposes of commerce require, that the lowest divisible point of money, or what is more properly called the *money unit*, should be very small, because by that means, price can be brought in the smallest things to bear a proportion to the value. And although it is not absolutely necessary, yet it is very desirable, that money should be increased in decimal ratio, because by that means all calculations of interest, exchange, insurance, and the like, are rendered much more

simple and accurate, and of course, more within the power of the great mass of the people. Wherever such things require much labor, time, and reflection, the greater number, who do not know, are made the dupes of the smaller number who do.

'The various coins, which have circulated in America, have undergone different changes in their value, so that there is hardly any which can be considered as a general standard, unless it be Spanish dollars. These pass in Georgia at five shillings, in North Carolina and New York at eight shillings, in Virginia and the four Eastern States at six shillings, and in all the other States, excepting South Carolina, at seven shillings and sixpence, and in South Carolina at thirty-two shillings and sixpence. The money unit of a new coin to agree, without a fraction, with all these different values of a dollar, excepting the last, will be the fourteen hundred and fortieth part of a dollar, equal to the sixteen hundredth part of a crown. Of these units, twenty-four will be a penny of Georgia, fifteen will be a penny of North Carolina or New York, twenty will be a penny of Virginia and the four Eastern States, sixteen will be a penny of all the other States, excepting South Carolina, and forty-eight will be thirteen pence of South Carolina.

'It has already been observed, that to have the money unit very small, is advantageous to commerce; but there is no necessity, that this money unit be exactly represented in coin; it is sufficient that its value be precisely known. On the present occasion, two copper coins will be proper, the one of eight units, and the other of five. These may be called an Eight, and a Five. Two of the former will make a penny, Proclamation or Pennsylvania money, and three a penny Georgia money. Of the latter, three will make a penny New York money, and four a penny lawful, or Virginia money. The money unit will be equal to a quarter of a grain of fine silver in coined money. Proceeding thence in a decimal ratio, one hundred would be the lowest silver coin, and might

be called a *Cent*. It would contain twenty-five grains of fine silver, to which may be added two grains of copper, and the whole would weigh one pennyweight and three grains. Five of these would make a *Quint*, or five hundred units, weighing five pennyweight and fifteen grains; and ten would make a *Mark*, or one thousand units, weighing eleven pennyweight and six grains.'*

---

* *See Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, Vol. xii. p. 91.

It may be proper to subjoin the elements of the letter here quoted, as extracted from Mr Morris's manuscripts of that date. He proposed the following table of currency;—

One crown, or ten dollars, equal to	10,000
One dollar, or ten bills, equal to	1,000
One bill, or ten pence, equal to	100
One penny, or ten quarters, equal to	10
One quarter, equal to	1

The value of the *quarter* is equal to a quarter of a grain of pure silver, or one fourteen hundred and fortieth part of a Spanish dollar.

This was his first plan of a new coinage, founded on the principle of decimals and a *money unit*. The larger piece, or crown, was to be of gold; the next, or dollar, of silver. He proposed, also, that for convenience there should be other coins struck, besides those here designated, but that each should contain a precise number of the money unit.

'The advantages of the coin here proposed,' he adds, 'are first, that none other will effect the object of banishing other currencies, because this alone applies without fractions to them all.

'Secondly, the minuteness of its lower denominations will render it an accurate measure of the smallest variations of quantity, or quality, in any commodity.

'Thirdly, the decimal proportion of its parts will render all calculations in it easy.

'Fourthly, few figures will be used for the largest sums, while at the same time the smallest sums will be comprehended.

'Lastly, as to the names above chosen, they, like all other names, are arbitrary, and perhaps better may be substituted. The word *crown*, occurred, from the following idea of an impression for a gold coin; viz. An Indian, with his bow in his left hand, and in his right hand thirteen arrows, and his right foot on a crown; the inscription, *manus inimica tyrannis*.

Notwithstanding this subject was discussed from time to time in Congress, nothing was decided about it for several years. Mr Jefferson was appointed one of a committee in 1784, for considering the coinage. He examined Mr Morris's scheme, allowed it to be ingenious, and in its general principles the best that could be devised.

He did not accord with him, however, in regard to his money unit, believing it to be too small for convenience, if not for practicability. It required so many figures to express small amounts, that it was feared the people would never be able to adopt it, and if they should, the evil itself would not be removed. Whoever should make a purchase amounting to a quarter of a dollar, for instance, would pay for it three hundred and sixty units, and however the coins might be subdivided as to size, this mode of expression must adhere to their value. In writing large sums in figures, the same inconvenience would occur to a much greater extent. A hundred dollars, instead of being noted by three figures, would be expressed by a hundred and forty-four thousand units, and require six figures.

To get rid of these obstacles, Mr Jefferson hit upon the dollar as a money unit, and applied to it Mr Morris's plan of decimal notation. He recommended it to Congress, in a paper explaining its advantages. In that state the subject remained for more than a year, till at length, in August, 1785, it was resolved, that the dollar should be the money unit of the United States, and the pieces of coin should be in a decimal ratio. But as yet there was no mint, and of course no coins were struck. A Committee of Congress had the business of coining in hand, but slow progress was made, and it was not till August of the next year, that the names and character of the coins were decided upon, and the way opened for establishing a mint. The first ordinance, however, about the unit and decimal ratio had gone into partial operation.

Meantime, while the committee were investigating the matter, Mr Morris wrote a letter to Dr Ramsay, then a member of the board, urging his plan anew, and adding some modi-

fications, by which he contrived to escape from his troublesome unit, and to introduce a large one, which was to operate on a very ingenious principle, and to be free from all the objections brought against the other. He took an arbitrary amount, without reference to any existing coin, which was to apply in its subdivisions to the currency of every State, and also to those of England and France. His idea was to have a *money of account*, and a *money of coinage*, the former to be used in mercantile transactions and book accounts, and the latter to pass as a currency. He adhered to the decimal divisions, and fashioned the coins of such a size, that they would adapt themselves without a fraction to the money of account.*

The great advantage, which he expected from this plan, was to introduce the new coinage and mode of reckoning easily into all the States, which he did not believe could be effect-

---

* He assumed for his *Unit* an amount equal to twelve shillings and six pence sterling, which he called a pound, making this divisable by ten, and giving the names of pounds, shillings, pence, and doits to the several divisions; thus,

One pound is equal to	1,000
One shilling equal to	100
One penny equal to	10
One doit equal to	1

Now the money of all the States, reduced to pence, may be expressed in this doit without a remainder. For example, in the New England currency five doits make a penny. Hence £10 19 5, reduced to pence, are equal to 2,633, which, multiplied by 5, give 13,165 doits, or 13 pounds and 165 doits of the new reckoning; or 13 pounds, 1 shilling, 6 pence, 5 doits. By an easy process the same result will follow with all the old currencies of the States; that is, any sum in pence may be reduced to doits without a fractional remainder, which is rarely the case with the cents now in use. The above unit is therefore taken, on account of its being susceptible of this division.

It will be seen, that, by omitting the names of shillings and pence, the mode of reckoning will be by dollars and doits, precisely like the present mode of dollars and cents, except that the place of doits takes three figures instead of two. By rejecting the last figure, as we now

ed by taking the dollar for the unit. To this latter scheme he states several objections.

'The proposed penny, (cent) or hundredth part of a dollar,' he observes, 'will not apply to any currency in America. It will be a British halfpenny, and, calculating accurately, nine of them make eight pence of New York currency, six make five pence of Pennsylvania currency, three make two pence of New England and Virginia, nine make five pence of Georgia, and twenty-seven make fourteen pence of South Carolina. Nay, the dollar itself will be a fractional sum, when compared with present currencies. This then being the case, it is beyond my comprehension, that the people of America should abandon their present local money, to adopt the proposed general money, which bears an accurate relation to no other than the currency of Great Britain.

'Let us suppose a merchant, desirous of adopting the plan of Congress, pays a laborer nine pence. Is this to be charged to his correspondent? It so happens, that, let him reside in any one of these States, he could not enter that sum on his books, should he open them in the new money. We cannot

---

do the mills in common calculations, the reckoning would then stand in dollars and pence, and be exactly the same as the present mode.

The table of coins proposed in connexion with this system of reckoning was as follows.

Crown, of gold,	value 1,200 doits
Half crown	600
Dollar, of silver	300
Shilling	100
Groat	20
Doit, of copper	1

These coins were chosen for a double purpose; viz. their convenient size, and their measures of weight and of the values of the old currency. Each coin weighs an exact number of grains, without a fraction, and its value in this respect might thus be easily proved. Each one is an expression of an exact number of pence in the old currencies of the States, as well as in that of England, and in the livres and sous of France. They are all, moreover, decimal parts of the new unit, and thus adapted to the money of account.

expect the common people, with whom the merchant must deal, will take the lead, and at once conform to a plan, which, simplify it as we may, they at least cannot comprehend. Some persons must begin, and who are to be the first? I answer the merchants. Now should it be rendered impracticable to them, they will not attempt it. But, as the merchant must in the first instance conform to the ideas of the common people in money matters, so the rest of the community must eventually conform to the merchant. This we know by experience, and therefore his convenience should be consulted by government, if they wish the plan to succeed.

'Indeed, were government about to institute a manufactory of scythes, we should expect that they would choose such as would be convenient to the mowers of America, though perhaps longer or shorter than are used in Switzerland. In like manner, it might be prudent for the money manufacturers to make such coins, as would suit the American merchants, though it might not square precisely with the currency of London or Amsterdam. The idea of a piece of silver worth one hundred coppers is easily comprehended. It is simple enough, and I have heard it said, that nice calculations on this subject are abstruse and unnecessary, for merchants might easily comply by rejecting the fractions. This also is easy and simple, and in a negotiation for a pennyworth of apples or nuts might answer, but if we take that unnecessary trouble of calculating, we shall find the rejection of these fractions would exceed five per cent, which merchants consider as a full compensation for much labor and some risk. To make a money, which involves the assumption and rejection of fractions, is a paraphrase on the bed of Procrustes. 'If the patient is too short for the bed, stretch him; if too long, clip him.'

These arguments, however plausible and in some respects cogent, did not bring Congress over to his views. They adhered to Mr Jefferson's unit, and the coinage was established upon that basis.

But there are evidently two sides to the question, and it

may not be easy even now to decide, which system was the best to attain the end desired in the shortest time. As to the ultimate convenience, they would both have come to nearly the same thing. The primary object was to establish a uniform mode of reckoning money in all parts of the union; the next, to introduce a coinage, which should drive the old coins out of the country, and supersede their use. According to Mr Morris's plan, this was to be done by an entire new coinage, and a system of reckoning, which should adapt itself with the greatest facility both to the old coins, and to the different systems already in vogue. Mr Jefferson believed, that it would be more readily accomplished, by taking a standard coin, whose value the people well understood, and making it the basis of the new divisions and nomenclature. Everybody knew the value of a dollar, and could easily comprehend the parts of a dollar, let them be named as they might.

Forty years of experiment have proved that the process has been slow. As yet it is far from being completed. The fractional remainders in converting the old currencies into the new, which were so much dreaded by Mr Morris, and which it was the first element in all his plans to evade, have presented the same obstacles that he anticipated. Many values in the old currencies cannot be expressed in the decimal parts of a dollar. Besides, two mischievous little coins of foreign growth, the eighth and sixteenth of a dollar, have kept their hold on the affections of the people, by reason of their being even parts of the adopted unit, although at variance with the decimal notation. Such is their power, that the government itself is to this day obliged to yield obedience to it, in the transactions of the postoffice. As things now stand, it is time for this vassalage to be thrown off, and the rates of postage fixed in the decimals of a dollar. Let the people pay the fractional half or quarter cent, in deference to their money unit, till it becomes so well grounded, as to expel these disorganizing little foreigners from circulation. New coins of home manufacture, and a plenty of them, are the only aids that can be

called in for such a purpose, and these will be feeble auxiliaries, unless a stigma of some sort shall be attached to the intruders from abroad.

Mr Morris's mother had been more or less affected with illness for several years, and she died in January, 1786. This event brought him to Morrisania, at which place and at New York he remained for two or three months. By his father's will, the estate at Morrisania and its appendages were left to his mother during her lifetime. The property then devolved upon the second son, Staats Long Morris, who was a General in the British army, and resided in England. Lewis Morris, the eldest son, had received his portion before his father's death. A legacy of seven thousand pounds was to be paid by General Morris to the other children, before he could take possession of the estate, and of this sum Gouverneur Morris was to receive two thousand pounds.

General Morris also owned lands in New Jersey, and to settle the affairs of these estates he came to America. As he had no intention to reside there, he was of course willing to sell this property upon fair terms, and his brother Gouverneur resolved to make the purchase. The amount required was much above his means, but by the accommodation of friends, and convenient arrangements with his brother, he finally bought the patrimonial estate at Morrisania, and a part, if not all, of the General's lands in New Jersey, the contract being completed before the end of the year.

His business operations had already become extensive, and in several of them he was concerned with Robert Morris. Commercial adventures, and particularly an East India voyage on a large scale, shipments of tobacco from Virginia to France, and shares in iron works on the Delaware River, were among the objects of this kind, to which his time and thoughts were devoted, and by which his fortune was increased. As the winter was approaching when he purchased the estate at Morrisania, he did not remain there long, but returned to Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONVENTION FOR FORMING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.—MR MORRIS'S OPINIONS IN THAT BODY.—MR MADISON'S LETTER.—HAMILTON.—MR MORRIS VISITS VIRGINIA.—PREPARES TO DEPART FOR EUROPE—WASHINGTON.

HAVING resided seven years in Pennsylvania, since he ceased to be a member of Congress, he was considered a citizen, and was elected one of the delegates from that State to the Convention for forming the Constitution of the United States. The Convention assembled at Philadelphia in May, 1787, and continued together more than four months, before the Constitution was completed. Mr Morris was present during the whole time, except a few days in the last part of June, which he passed at Morrisania, being called there to arrange the affairs of his farm. He had employed a manager, and a large number of laborers in the spring, and was now commencing extensive improvements upon his estate, such as removing and repairing buildings, planting forest and fruit trees, and directing various agricultural arrangements, which demanded his presence. As soon as he had effected a general supervision of these matters, and left full and minute written instructions with his manager, he went back and took his seat again in the Convention.

As there is not a note or memorandum among his papers, indicating his acts in the Convention, very little can be said on that subject. In a letter to Colonel Pickering, written two years before his death, he remarks; 'While I sat in the Convention, my mind was too much occupied by the interests of our country, to keep notes of what we had done. Some gen-

tlemen, I was told, passed their evenings in transcribing speeches from short-hand minutes of the day. My faculties were on the stretch to further our business, remove impediments, obviate objections, and conciliate jarring opinions.' In sundry letters to his friends, contained in his published correspondence, and written after constitutional questions began to be much agitated in Congress, particularly one to Mr Walsh, he explains his views on those topics, and alludes to the proceedings of the Convention, but this only in general terms, and rather as an interpreter of its intentions, than a historian of its deeds.

Thus destitute of written or printed materials on this subject, I applied to Mr Madison, the only survivor of the list of worthies, who attended the Convention, and signed the great charter of union and freedom. The following are extracts of a letter to Mr Madison.

'It is said by several persons, who profess to know the fact, that the Constitution in its present form and language is from the pen of Gouverneur Morris; that, after all the debates were finished, and each part had been adopted in substance, the instrument was put into his hands to be wrought into proper phraseology and style. His friends are in the habit of thinking, that much is due to him for the clear, simple, and expressive language, in which the Constitution is clothed.

'The following anecdote is also current. While the Convention was sitting, Mr Morris was absent for several days. On his return to Philadelphia, he called at the house of Robert Morris, where he found General Washington, who, as well as Robert Morris, was much dejected at what they regarded the deplorable state of things in the Convention. Debates had run high, conflicting opinions were obstinately adhered to, animosities were kindling, some of the members were threatening to go home, and, at this alarming crisis, a dissolution of the Convention was hourly to be apprehended. Instructed in these particulars, Gouverneur Morris went into the Convention on the day following, and spoke with such eloquence and power, on

the necessity of union, of partial sacrifices and temperate discussion, that he contributed much to work a change in the feelings of the members, which was the means of restoring harmony, and ultimately of attaining the objects of the Convention. It is added, that, as his absence had prevented his partaking of the warmth, which had been excited by the previous discussions, his counsel and coolness had the greater effect.'

Concerning these points, and in reply to queries on others, Mr Madison wrote an answer, which every reader will be glad to see entire.

'Montpellier, April 8th, 1831.

'Dear Sir,

'I have duly received your letter of March 30th. In answer to your inquiries, "respecting the part acted by Gouverneur Morris in the Federal Convention of 1787, and the political doctrines maintained by him," it may be justly said, that he was an able, an eloquent, and an active member, and shared largely in the discussions succeeding the 1st of July, previous to which, with the exception of a few of the early days, he was absent.

'Whether he accorded precisely with the "political doctrines of Hamilton," I cannot say. He certainly did not "incline to the democratic side," and was very frank in avowing his opinions, when most at variance with those prevailing in the Convention. He did not propose any outline of a constitution, as was done by Hamilton; but contended for certain articles, (a Senate for life particularly) which he held essential to the stability and energy of a government, capable of protecting the rights of property against the spirit of democracy. He wished to make the weight of wealth balance that of numbers, which he pronounced to be the only effectual security to each, against the encroachments of the other.

'The *finish* given to the style and arrangement of the Constitution fairly belongs to the pen of Mr Morris; the task having, probably, been handed over to him by the chairman of the

Committee, himself a highly respectable member, and with the ready concurrence of the others. A better choice could not have been made, as the performance of the task proved. It is true, that the state of the materials, consisting of a reported draft in detail, and subsequent resolutions accurately penned, and falling easily into their proper places, was a good preparation for the symmetry and phraseology of the instrument, but there was sufficient room for the talents and taste stamped by the author on the face of it. The alterations made by the Committee are not recollected. They were not such, as to impair the merit of the composition. Those, verbal and others, made in the Convention, may be gathered from the Journal, and will be found also to leave that merit altogether unimpaired.

'The anecdote you mention may not be without a foundation, but not in the extent supposed. It is certain, that the return of Mr Morris to the Convention was at a critical stage of its proceedings. The knot, felt as the Gordian one, was the question between the larger and the smaller States, on the rule of voting in the senatorial branch of the legislature; the latter claiming, the former opposing, the rule of equality. Great zeal and pertinacity had been shown on both sides, and an equal division of votes on the question had been reiterated and prolonged, till it had become not only distressing, but seriously alarming. It was during that period of gloom, that Dr Franklin made the proposition for a religious service in the Convention, an account of which was so erroneously given, with every semblance of authenticity, through the National Intelligencer, several years ago. The crisis was not over, when Mr Morris is said to have had an interview and conversation with General Washington and Mr Robert Morris, such as may well have occurred. But it appears that, on the day of his reentering the Convention, a proposition had been made from another quarter to refer the knotty question to a Committee, with a view to some compromise, the indications being manifest, that sundry members from the larger States were relaxing

in their opposition, and that some ground of compromise was contemplated, such as finally took place, and as may be seen in the printed Journal. Mr Morris was in the deputation from the large State of Pennsylvania, and combated the compromise throughout. The tradition is, however, correct, that, on the day of his resuming his seat, he entered with anxious feelings into the debate, and, in one of his speeches, painted the consequences of an abortive result to the Convention, in all the deep colors suited to the occasion. But it is not believed, that any material influence on the turn, which things took, could be ascribed to his efforts. For, besides the mingling with them some of his most disrelished ideas, the topics of his eloquent appeals to the members had been exhausted during his absence, and their minds were too much made up, to be susceptible of new impressions.

'It is but due to Mr Morris to remark, that, to the brilliancy of his genius, he added, what is too rare, a candid surrender of his opinions, when the lights of discussion satisfied him, that they had been too hastily formed, and a readiness to aid in making the best of measures in which he had been overruled.

'In making this hastened communication, I have more confidence in the discretion with which it will be used, than in its fulfilment of your anticipations. I hope it will, at least, be accepted as a proof of my respect for your object, and of the sincerity with which I tender to you a reassurance of my cordial esteem and good wishes.

'James Madison.'

In Yates's minutes of the Convention there is a brief report of a speech, which was made by Mr Morris on the second of July, and in which sentiments are advanced in accordance with those above ascribed to him by Mr Madison. He followed Roger Sherman, who had just said, 'it seems we have got to a point, where we cannot move one way or the other.' Mr Morris avowed himself the advocate of a 'strong government,' but admitted that the aristocratic tendency of wealth

ought to be guarded. The House of Representatives, as originating from the people, he thought would be subject to precipitancy, changeableness, and excess, which could be checked only by virtue and ability in the Senate. For this reason, he would have the Senate composed of men possessing large property, whose pride would be enlisted in support of their consistency and permanency, and who, to make them completely independent, should be appointed for life.

He allowed that examples from history proved wealth to incline naturally to tyranny; power always seeks to enlarge its bounds and fortify itself; but he believed this aristocratic feature of the Senate would be balanced by the democratic branch, and that together they would secure the stability of the government. Vacancies in the Senate he thought should be filled by the executive, for if the Senators were chosen either by the people, or any other mode of election by the States, they would not be a sufficient check upon the representative branch, they would partake too much of the same character, be imbrued with local and State prejudices, and overlook the general government, which it ought to be their special province to strengthen and uphold.

It had been proposed, that the Senators should be incapable of holding any office under the national government. To this idea he objected. He would give them every inducement to take an interest in the government, as a means of making them more attentive to its welfare, and bringing their weight to act in the scale of its confederated powers.

Whatever may have been Mr Morris's opinions in the Convention, and however he may have approved or disapproved parts of the Constitution, it can be affirmed in his praise, that no one put his name to the whole instrument with a more willing mind, or felt a livelier concern as to its final success with the people, or was more zealous in all his after life to maintain its integrity, as the palladium of national freedom and happiness. In one of his letters he says, that Hamilton requested him to join the gifted trio in writing the '*Federalist*.'

Why he declined the proposal he does not tell, but it may be presumed, that the multiplicity and pressure of his private affairs at that time absorbed his whole attention, and left him no leisure to engage in elaborate compositions.

It must be confessed, however, and it is a tribute due to so rare an instance of public virtue, that, after the Constitution had passed the ordeal of the Convention, no one exhibited a more illustrious example of disinterestedness and patriotism, sacrifices and effort, than Hamilton. He had presented a plan of his own, which differed radically from the one that was carried through; he labored long and hard, with the full force of his mind and eloquence, to impress his convictions on others; his character as a statesman, and as an accurate observer and judge of human events, was pledged on the side of his faith and predictions; but all in vain, the current set against him, and was resistless. Yet, with a nobleness of spirit seldom seen on similar occasions, he rose above defeat, sacrifised the pride of opinion on the altar of public good, signed the Constitution, and was ever afterwards in the very front ranks of its ablest defenders.

As soon as the Convention had dissolved, Mr Morris repaired to Morrisania, where he passed four or five weeks. On his return to Philadelphia he wrote to General Washington.

'Philadelphia, October 30th, 1787.

'Dear Sir,

'Shortly after your departure from this place, I went to my farm, and returned hither last Sunday evening. Living out of the busy world, I had nothing to say worth your attention, or I should earlier have given you the trouble you must now experience. Although not very inquisitive about political opinion, I have not been quite inattentive. The States eastward of New York appear to be almost unanimous in favor of the new Constitution, (for I make no account of the dissension in Rhode Island.) Their preachers are advocates for the adoption, and this circumstance, coinciding with the steady support

of the property, and other abilities of the country, makes the current set strongly, and, I trust, inresistibly that way.

'Jersey is so near unanimity in her favorable opinion, that we may count with certainty on something more than votes, should the state of affairs hereafter require the application of pointed arguments. New York, hemmed in between the warm friends of the Constitution, will not easily, unless supported by powerful States, make any important struggle, even though her citizens were unanimous, which is by no means the case. Parties there are nearly balanced. If the assent, or dissent, of the New York legislature were to decide on the fate of America, there would still be a chance, though I believe the force of government would preponderate, and effect a rejection. But the legislature cannot assign to the people any good reason, for not trusting them with a decision on their own affairs, and must therefore agree to a convention. In the choice of a convention, it is not improbable that the federal party will prove strongest, for persons of very distinct and opposite interests have joined on this subject.

'With respect to this State, I am far from being decided in my opinion, that they will consent. True it is, that the city and its neighborhood are enthusiastic in the cause, but I dread the cold and sour temper of the back counties, and still more the wicked industry of those, who have long habituated themselves to live on the public, and cannot bear the idea of being removed from the power and profit of State government, which has been and still is the means of supporting themselves, their families, and dependants, and (which perhaps is equally grateful) of depressing and humbling their political adversaries. What opinions prevail more southward I cannot guess. You are in a better condition, than any other person, to judge of a great and important part of that country.

'I have observed, that your name to the new Constitution has been of infinite service. Indeed, I am convinced, that if you had not attended the Convention, and the same paper had been handed out to the world, it would have met with a colder

reception, with fewer and weaker advocates, and with more and more strenuous opponents. As it is, should the idea prevail, that you will not accept of the Presidency, it would prove fatal in many parts. The truth is, that your great and decided superiority leads men willingly to put you in a place, which will not add to your personal dignity, nor raise you higher than you already stand. But they would not readily put any other person in the same situation, because they feel the elevation of others, as operating by comparison the degradation of themselves, and, however absurd this idea may be, yet you will agree with me, that men must be treated as men, and not as machines, much less as philosophers, and least of all things as reasonable creatures, seeing that in effect they reason not to direct, but to excuse, their conduct.

'Thus much for the public opinion on these subjects, which is not to be neglected in a country where opinion is everything. I am, &c.

'Gouverneur Morris.'

Business now called Mr Morris a second time to Virginia, where he remained, during the larger portion of the winter and spring, superintending the mercantile affairs of Robert Morris, in which he was himself also partly concerned. Large contracts had been entered into by Robert Morris for supplying tobacco in France, and as Virginia was the theatre of that traffic, it was necessary to have an agent there, who understood the business, and who was qualified to arrange some important matters, that had got into disorder, and caused uneasiness among the purchasers in Europe. While in Virginia he wrote a letter to a gentleman in France, containing a paragraph on the political state of affairs.

'You will long ere this have seen the Constitution proposed for the United States. This paper has been the subject of infinite investigation, disputation, and declamation. While some have boasted it as a work from Heaven, others have given it a less righteous origin. I have many reasons to believe, that it

was the work of plain honest men, and such, I think, it will appear. Faulty it must be, for what is perfect? But if adopted, experience will, I believe, show, that its faults are just the reverse of what they are supposed to be. As yet, this paper is but a dead letter. Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Georgia have adopted it. We wait impatiently the result of their deliberations in Massachusetts. Should that State also adopt it, which I hope and believe, there will then be little doubt of a general acquiescence, but otherwise it may be a tedious and difficult business. Should it, however, take effect, the affairs of this country will put on a much better aspect, than they have yet worn, and America will soon be as much respected abroad, as she has for some time past been disregarded.'

The time at length arrived, when he was soon to sail for Europe, and he wrote to General Washington for letters of introduction.

'Morrisania, November 12th, 1788.

'Dear General,

'After many unforeseen delays, I am about shortly to take my departure from Philadelphia for the kingdom of France, and I expect to visit both Holland and England. When I desire to be favored with your commands, it is not the mere ceremonious form of words, which you may every day meet from every man you meet, and which you know better than any man how to estimate at its true value. Whether I can be useful to you in any way, I know not; but this I know, that you may command my best endeavors. And I now desist from farther profession on that subject, because I am sure you know my sincerity.

'You will oblige me by giving me letters of introduction to those persons, who may in your opinion be useful to me, and to whom you may think it proper to present me. Among others to Mr Jefferson, with whom I have only a slight acquaintance. I believe I once mentioned to you my wish, not to be encumbered with the letters introductory of the many, who

are prone to give them. I think them a kind of paper money, which is not only of little value, but which is not always a reputable, though a legal tender. I solicit yours, as an undoubted bill of exchange, which is gold wherever it goes. Permit me, however, to pursue the mercantile phrase, or metaphor, and honestly to request that you do not give me credit for more than I am worth, lest proving a bankrupt, you be called on by my creditors.

'I will pray your care of the enclosed to Colonel Humphreys, who, I doubt not, is still with you, and will, I expect, come on with you in the spring. I promised you some Chinese pigs, a promise which I can perform only by halves; but such as I have I will send you; and, to piece and patch the matter as well as I may, in company with the pigs shall be sent a pair of Chinese geese, which are really the foolishest geese I ever beheld, for they choose all times for sitting but the spring, and one of them is now actually engaged in that business.

'It would be degrading to the noble race of man, should I introduce politics after hogs and geese. This is a tolerable excuse for saying nothing, but the truth is I have nothing to say. I am of the breed of optimists, and believe that all will go well, for you will certainly be seated in the President's chair, and will, I am certain, when there greatly labor to prevent things from going ill. As to the rest, I heartily agree in the text, that "the wisdom of man is foolishness with God," having seen both fools and folly succeed in a most surprising manner. And the only key to such sort of success, that I ever met with, was in a sarcastic remark on three lawyers of New York; Smith given to the study of divinity, Alexander deep in mathematics, and C. deep in nothing. Smith, said the wag, is always in the clouds; Alexander loses himself in angles and triangles; the only sensible man at the bar is C. for he talks nonsense to a common jury.

'Present, I pray you, my sincere respects to Mrs Washington. It is my fervent wish, that neither she nor you may regret

the shades of Mount Vernon. But this is more my wish, than expectation, for I do not believe it possible for you to be more happily placed, at least if I may judge from what I saw and what I felt. I am yours,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

In compliance with this request, General Washington sent him several letters of introduction to persons in England, France, and Holland. He likewise entrusted him with a commission to purchase in Paris a gold watch for his own use, 'not a small, trifling, nor a finical, ornamental one, but a watch well executed in point of workmanship, large and flat, with a plain, handsome key.' In regard to the Presidency, upon which Mr Morris had touched, he adds; 'I have really very little leisure or inclination to enter on the discussion of a subject so unpleasant to me. You may be persuaded, in the first place, that I hope the choice will not fall upon me; and in the second, that, if it should, and I can with any degree of propriety decline, I shall certainly contrive to get rid of the acceptance. But if, after all, a kind of inevitable necessity should impel me to a different fate, it will be time enough to yield to its impulse, when it can be no longer resisted.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR MORRIS SAILS FOR EUROPE.—ARRIVES IN PARIS.—LAFAYETTE.—JEFFERSON.—MR MORRIS'S DIARY.—EXTRACTS CONCERNING EVENTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.—MADAME DE CHASTELLUX.—DUTCHESS OF ORLEANS.—MARECHAL DE CASTRIES.—NECKER.—CEREMONY OF OPENING THE STATES GENERAL.—SEGUR.—THE BISHOP D'AUTUN.—MONTMORIN.—MADAME DE STAEL.—LETTER TO LAFAYETTE ON A NEW MINISTRY.—AFFAIR OF FAVRAS.—MR MORRIS'S NOTE TO THE QUEEN.

THE ship Henrietta, on board of which Mr Morris was embarked for France, passed the Capes of Delaware and put to

sea, on the eighteenth of December. It was a cheerless day, and the shores of his native country receded from his view, under an atmosphere darkened and chilled with snow, sleet, and hail. He kept a journal during the whole voyage, but like most journals at sea, it is little else than a record of the winds and waves, calms, gales, and storms. It establishes the certainty, however, that he had a most disagreeable winter passage of forty days, before the Henrietta entered the port of Havre. He remained there three days, detained by the civilities of friends and arrangements of business. One gentleman, in particular, beset him with his attentions. 'This must,' says he, 'certainly be a man of great wealth, great talents, and great integrity, for he has assured us of all this twenty times over. He has given me some advice gratis. He thinks it a great pity, that he is not King, or Minister at least. France would then be well governed, for all her misfortunes flow from the ignorance and cupidity of her rulers, who have done no one wise act these thirty years, and the alliance with America is, it seems, the most foolish part of all her conduct.'

Mr Morris arrived in Paris on the third of February, 1789, and the first persons he sought out were Mr Jefferson, at that time American Minister in France, and the Marquis de Lafayette. These gentlemen engaged him to dine the two succeeding days. Meantime he delivered his letters of introduction, looked out for lodgings, and prepared to establish himself for a residence of considerable duration in Paris. With Lafayette, of course, he had been well acquainted in America. After their first interview on the present occasion, he writes in his Diary; 'Lafayette is full of politics; he appears to be too republican for the genius of his country.' In short, it is as well to premise at the outset, that, from the first day of his arrival in France, Mr Morris showed very little cordiality of sentiment or feeling with the revolutionists; and although some of his connexions of friendship were among the leaders of that party, yet his attachments soon ran into the other channel, and his intimate associates were chiefly in the list of those, who aimed

only at a moderate reform of the old system, but deprecated revolutionary projects and principles. This will appear so manifest at every step we take with him, that it is only necessary here to throw out the hint as a clue, which may conduct the reader to a proper understanding of his opinions, counsels, and acts, as they shall arise in our progress.

In the family of Lafayette he was received with that frank and open-handed hospitality, those kind and unaffected civilities, which, from that day to this, have been bestowed upon every American, whose good fortune has given him an opportunity to participate them. Of these Mr Morris himself does not forget to make due acknowledgments. When he dined there, soon after his arrival, he might perhaps be allowed to feel flattered at a trifling incident mentioned in his Diary. 'After dinner, one of M. de Lafayette's little daughters sang a song for me. It happened to be one of my own composition. Madame is a very agreeable good woman.' But he never would be reconciled to the politics of his friend. When Lafayette showed him a draft of the celebrated *Declaration of Rights*, which he first proposed to the National Assembly, Mr Morris writes; 'I gave him my opinions, and suggested several amendments, tending to soften the high colored expressions of freedom. It is not by sounding words, that revolutions are produced.'

From the time of his first arrival in Paris, he kept a Diary of occurrences, so minute and full, that no abridgment, or analysis, can convey to the reader so good an idea of his life in that city, and his observations on passing events, as selections in his own language. In such a journal, there must of course be numerous unimportant particulars, which would neither merit the attention, nor contribute to the interest, of a general reader. Limits must also be prescribed, suitable to the compass of this memoir. Upon these principles, therefore, of comparative value and proportionate extent, the extracts will be made, in chronological order, without regard to a connexion between the topics treated; for indeed the nature

of the materials would render any attempt at such a connexion impracticable.

The Diary seems to have been designed for his private use, rather as a register of his first impressions, and an aid to his reminiscences, than as containing memorials of permanent utility, or for the inspection of others. Candor and justice, therefore, will plead successfully with every reader to regard with indulgence the negligences, or other defects of style, which may be detected in writings of such a character.

'*March 1st.*—Sup with Madame de la Suse. A small party absorbed in Quinze. Monsieur de B. for want of something else to do, asks me many questions about America, in a manner which shows he cares little for the information. By way of giving him some adequate idea of our people, when he mentioned the necessity of fleets and armies to secure us against invasion, I tell him, that nothing would be more difficult than to subdue a nation, every individual of which, in the pride of freedom, thinks himself equal to a king; and if, Sir, you should look down on him, would say, "I am a man; are you anything more?" "All this is very well; but there must be a difference of ranks, and I should say to one of these people,—'You, Sir, who are equal to a king, make me a pair of shoes.'" "Our citizens, Sir, have a manner of thinking peculiar to themselves. This shoemaker would reply; 'Sir, I am very glad of the opportunity to make you a pair of shoes. It is my duty to make shoes, and I love to do my duty. Does your King do his?"' This manner of thinking and speaking, however, is too masculine for the climate I am now in.

'*March 3d.*—Monsieur le Comte de Nenni does me the honor of a visit, and detains me till 3 o'clock. I then set off in great haste to dine with the Comtesse de B. on an invitation of a week's standing. Arrive at about a quarter past three, and find in the drawing room some dirty linen and no fire. While a waiting woman takes away one, a valet lights up the other. Three small sticks in a deep bed of ashes give no great expectation of heat. By the smoke, however, all doubts

are removed respecting the existence of fire. To expel the smoke, a window is opened, and, the day being cold, I have the benefit of as fresh air as can reasonably be expected in so large a city.

'Towards four o'clock the guests begin to assemble, and I begin to expect that, as Madame is a poetess, I shall have the honor to dine with that exalted part of the species, who devote themselves to the Muses. In effect, the gentlemen begin to compliment their respective works, and as regular hours cannot be expected in a house, where the mistress is occupied more with the intellectual, than the material world, I have a delightful prospect of a continuance of the scene. Towards five, Madame steps in to announce dinner, and the hungry poets advance to the charge. As they bring good appetites, they have certainly reason to praise the feast. And I console myself in the persuasion, that, for this day at least, I shall escape an indigestion. A very narrow escape too, for some rancid butter, of which the cook had been liberal, puts me in bodily fear. If the repast is not abundant, we have at least the consolation, that there is no lack of conversation. Not being perfectly master of the language, most of the jests escaped me. As for the rest of the company, each being employed either in saying a good thing, or in studying one to say, it is no wonder if he cannot find time to applaud that of his neighbor. They all agree, that we live in an age alike deficient in justice and in taste. Each finds in the fate of his own works numerous instances to justify this censure. They tell me, to my great surprise, that the public now condemn theatrical compositions, before they have heard the first recital. And to remove my doubts, the Countess is so kind as to assure me, that this rash decision has been made on one of her own pieces. In pitying modern degeneracy, we rise from the table.

'I take my leave immediately after the coffee, which by no means dishonors the precedent repast; and Madame informs me, that on Tuesdays and Thursdays she is always at home,

and will always be glad to see me. While I stammer out some return to the compliment, my heart, convinced of my unworthiness to partake of such attic entertainments, makes me promise never again to occupy the place from which, perhaps, I had excluded a worthier personage.

'*March 25th.*—Went to Madame de Chastellux's. Madame de Ségur and M. de Puisignieu arrived shortly after. In a few minutes the Dutchess of Orleans, and then more company. The Dutchess is affable, and handsome enough to punish the Duke for his irregularities. Madame de Ségur goes away early, as the company seems determined to increase. The widow of the late Duke of Orleans comes in, and at going away, according to custom, kisses the Dutchess. I observe that the ladies of Paris are very fond of each other; which gives room to some observations from her Royal Highness on the person, who has just quitted the room, which show that the kiss does not always betoken great affection. In going away, she is pleased to say, that she is glad to have met me; and I believe her. The reason is, that I dropped some expressions and sentiments a little rough, and which were agreeable, because they contrast with the palling polish she constantly meets with everywhere. Hence, I conclude, that the less I have the honor of such good company the better; for, when the novelty ceases, all is over, and I shall probably be worse than insipid.

'*March 27th.*—At three the Maréchal de Castries calls, and takes me to dine with Monsieur and Madame Necker. In the *salon* we found Madame. She seems to be a woman of sense, and somewhat of the masculine in her character. A little before dinner Monsieur enters. He has the look and manner of the counting-house, and, being dressed in embroidered velvet, he contrasts strongly with his habiliments. His bow, his address, say, "I am the man." Our company is one half academicians. The Dutchess of Biron, formerly Lauzun, is one. I observe that M. Necker seems occupied by ideas, which rather distress him. He cannot, I think, stay in office half an hour, after the nation insist on keeping him there. He is now much

harassed, and Madame receives continually *Memoires* from different people; so that she seems as much occupied as he is. If he is really a very great man, I am deceived; and yet this is a rash judgment. If he is not a laborious man, I am also deceived.*

'*April* 3*d*.—I go to the Louvre, on an engagement with Madame de Flahaut, to see the statues and paintings. She is in bed, and her brother-in-law in the room with her, so that it appears she has, as she says, forgotten her engagement to me. M. de Flahaut comes in. She sends us forward, and is to follow. This is done. We walk over the court of the Louvre through the mud, and view the statues. The paintings we cannot see. That pleasure is for another opportunity. Return to her quarter. Monsieur, presuming that I was about to follow her up stairs merely out of politesse, apologizes for me. In consequence, I take my leave. And thus a scene, which imagination had painted very well, turns out good for nothing. The weather contributes to render it disagreeable. Wind, rain, and of course mud without, and dampness within. But this is human life. Monsieur, as I go away, expresses a hope to see me again soon, and requests to be commanded, if he can be useful in anything. This politesse is always agreeable; though a man must be a fool to believe in it.

---

* There is a curious coincidence between these impressions of Necker, which Mr Morris derived from his first interview, and the description given of him in Montgaillard's spirited History of the French Revolution. 'In his personal appearance M. Necker had nothing insinuating, or even agreeable. His figure was repulsive at first sight, and it was difficult not to perceive an affected stateliness of air, which seemed to say, "behold in me a great man, a superior genius." Before the opening of the States-General, M. Necker said modestly, "the safety of France is in my portfolio." We have heard Madame de Staël repeat these words of her father, and in the excess of her tenderness, or rather of her filial adoration, Madame de Staël found these words just and suitable.'—*Hist. de France, &c. par Montgaillard*, Vol. ii. p. 12.

'From hence go to M. le Normands, for the copy of a letter, which was to have been sent this morning, but is, I suppose, neglected by his absence. It turns out to be as I suspected. The *commis* promises it for this evening. In going from hence, I slip as I step into the carriage, and bruise myself. Thus everything goes wrong. Visit the Countess de Darfort. She has company, and is but just risen. Pressed to dine; but decline it. She is going to sup with the Baron de Bezonvald, and I promise to be there if I can. She says if I do not go, it is because I will not. *Ou fait tout ce qu'on veut.* I stammer out a bald compliment in reply. I am certainly good for nothing, and the only tolerable thing I can do is to go home. This is done; and, being out of humour with myself, I find the dinner very bad. Threaten to deal with another *traiteur.* Extremely ridiculous! The waiter, who behaves with great humility, must, I think, despise me for pretending to talk angrily, before I can talk French.

'At five, I visit Madame de Ségur. Madame de Chastellux and M. de Puisignieu are there. The former is obliged to go away. In conversing about public men and measures, I am so weak and absurd as to express many opinions, which I ought to conceal, and some of which I may, perhaps, find reason to alter. Two ladies come in, and, as I am going away, Madame de Ségur, to whom I had mentioned my intention of visiting Mr Jefferson, has the politeness to say, "*nous vous reverrons, Monsieur Morris,*" and I have the stupidity to answer in the affirmative. Call on Mr Jefferson, and sit an hour with him, which is, at least, fifty minutes too long, for his daughters had left the room on my approach, and waited only my departure to return. At least I think so. Returning, in compliance with my promise, call on Madame de Ségur, and am shown into the room where she is with her father-in-law. He lies on a couch, or rather sofa, the gout in his right hand, which is his only hand. Madame de Chastellux and another lady there. I think I was wrong to come here, and, for that reason, find it more difficult to get away. Vastly awkward.

At length make a shift to take leave; and, to avoid all further folly for this day, determined to go home and not visit the Baron.

'*April 17th.*—Visit Monsieur de Lafayette. A long conversation. He gives me the history of his political campaign in Auvergne. I find that his mind is getting right, as to the business he has in hand. We consider of a revolt in Paris, and agree that it might occasion much mischief, but could not produce any good. That, in consequence, it will be best to enter a protestation against the manner of convoking the city. But to go on with the business and get the members elected. There is to be a meeting of the Noblesse this afternoon, and Monsieur de Clermont will talk to this effect. He is, if possible, to be made one of the representatives; and is, therefore, to be brought forward as a speaker immediately. Lafayette says he has genius and family, though of small fortune.

'Go to dine with Monsieur de la Breteche. After dinner Monsieur de Durfort comes in. He has been at the meeting. Monsieur de Clermont's speech was very much admired, and he carried his point by a large majority, contrary, says M. de Durfort, to the wish of M. Necker's friends. I am very curious, and among other things, ask if Monsieur de Lafayette was there. Yes, and said a few words, which were very well. As M. de Durfort is not the friend either of Monsieur de Lafayette or of Monsieur Necker, I fancy things have gone very right.

'From Monsieur de la Breteche, I go to Madame de Ségur's. We have a little *tête à tête* over a dish of tea. The tea is very good, and her conversation is better flavored than her tea, which comes from Russia. The Maréchal de Duras comes in, and says a great many very civil things to Madame de Ségur, mixed with some advice. She seems not much affected either by the one or the other. From hence I go to the Palais Royal, and find Madame de Chastellux with her son lying in her lap. A mother in this situation is always interesting, and her late loss renders her particularly so. In

the course of conversation, asking after the health of her princess, she repeats a message formerly delivered. Between nine and ten, it is concluded that the Dutchess will not make her evening visit, and I take my leave, returning the message I had received. "I have visited Madame la Duchesse chez Madame de Chastellux, and am sorry not to have met her there."'

Madame de Chastellux, of whom Mr Morris has spoken several times in the above extracts, was the widow of his late friend, the Marquis de Chastellux, who had died three months before his arrival in France. She was an Irish lady, whom the Marquis had first met at Spa the year before, and whom he soon after married. He wrote a letter to Mr Morris at the time, speaking in great raptures of her beauty, character, and accomplishments. She became maid of honor to the Dutchess of Orleans, and was, it would seem, her most intimate companion.

'*April 20th.*—If the Court should attempt now to recede, it is impossible to conjecture the event. The chiefs of the patriotic party have gone so far, that they cannot retreat with safety. If there be any real vigor in the nation, the prevailing party in the States-General may, if they please, overturn the monarchy itself, should the King commit his authority to a contest with them. The Court is extremely feeble, and the manners are so extremely corrupt, that they cannot succeed, if there be any consistent opposition, unless the whole nation be equally depraved. The probability, I think, is, that an attempt to retreat, at this late period of the business, would bring the Court into absolute contempt.'

The two extracts, which follow, relate to the famous opening of the States-General at Versailles, which has been called by historians *the first day of the Revolution*. Great preparations had been made to give splendor and effect to this ceremony. There was a religious procession the day preceding, and a discourse, or sermon, was pronounced by the Bishop of Nancy, at which were present the Royal Family, the nobility, and all

the members of the three orders about to constitute the grand Assembly of the nation, which was now convened after a lapse of more than a century and a half. The Bishop, when he used the words public liberty, and some other expressions of that kind, was loudly applauded, with continued clapping of hands, a demonstration of feeling, it is said, never before known in a church, and particularly on a religious occasion.

'*May 4th.*—At six this morning I set off for Versailles. Am overtaken on the road by M. le Normond and M. la Caze. We alight together, and walk through the streets till the procession commences, except a little while that I sit with Madame de Flahaut, who was so kind as to send and offer me part of a window.

'The procession is very magnificent, through a double row of tapestry. Neither the King nor Queen appear too well pleased. The former is repeatedly saluted as he passes along with *Vive le Roi;* but the latter meets not a single acclamation. She looks, however, with contempt on the scene in which she acts a part, and seems to say, for the present I submit, but I shall have my turn.

'Return to Paris and dine. After dinner walk to the Palais Royal and see Madame de Chastellux. Make a short visit, as she is going to the Dutchess. Find I was right in my conjecture, as to the Queen's temper and the King's. He was vexed that the Duke of Orleans should walk as representative, and not as Prince of the blood; and, also, that his consort received no mark of public satisfaction. She was exceedingly hurt. I cannot help feeling the mortification, which the poor Queen meets with, for I see only the woman; and it seems unmanly to treat a woman with unkindness. Madame de Chastellux tells me a sprightly reply of Madame Adelaide, the King's aunt; who, when the Queen in a fit of resentment, speaking of this nation, said, "*Ces indignes Français*," exclaimed, "*dites indignés, Madame.*"

'The Dutchess of Orleans could not get a billet for me, but the Dutchess de Bourbon has promised to try, and, if she suc-

ceeds, will send it to the Palais Royal this evening; and, in that case, Madame de Chastellux will receive it from the Duchesse d'Orleans, and send it to me.

'*May 5th.*—Go to Versailles, and a little after eight get into the Hall. Sit there in a cramped situation till after twelve, during which time, the different members are brought in and placed, one Bailliage after the other. When M. Necker comes in, he is loudly and repeatedly clapped, and so is the Duke of Orleans, also a Bishop, who has long lived in his diocese, and preached there what his profession enjoins. Another Bishop, who preached yesterday a sermon, which I did not hear, is applauded; but those near me say that this applause is unmerited. An old man, who refused to dress in the costume prescribed for the *Tiers*, and who appears in his farmer's habit, receives a long and loud plaudit. M. de Mirabeau is hissed, though not very loudly. The King at length arrives, and takes his seat, the Queen on his left, two steps lower than himself. He makes a short speech, very proper, and well spoken, or rather read. The tone and manner have all the *fierté*, which can be desired in, or expected from, the blood of the Bourbons. He is interrupted in the reading by acclamations so warm and of such lively affection, that the tears start from my eyes in spite of myself. The Queen weeps, or seems to weep, but not one voice is heard to wish her well. I would certainly raise mine, if I were a Frenchman; but I have no right to express a sentiment, and in vain solicit those who are near me to do it.

'After the King has spoken he takes off his hat, and when he puts it on again, his Nobles imitate the example. Some of the *Tiers* do the same; but by degrees they, one after the other, take them off again. The King then takes off his hat. The Queen seems to think it wrong, and a conversation seems to pass, in which the King tells her he chooses to do it, whether consistent or not consistent with the ceremonial; but I would not swear to this, being too far distant to see very distinctly, much less to hear. The Nobles uncover by degrees, so that

if the ceremonial requires these manœuvres, the troops are not yet properly drilled.

'After the King's speech, and the coverings and uncoverings, the *Garde des Sceaux* makes one much longer; but it is delivered in a very ungraceful manner, and so indistinctly, that nothing can be judged of it by me until it is in print. When he has done, M. Necker rises. He tries to play the orator, but he plays it very ill. The audience salute him with a long and loud plaudit. Animated by their approbation, he falls into action and emphasis; but a bad accent and ungraceful manner destroy much of the effect, which ought to follow from a composition written by M. Necker, and spoken by M. Necker. He presently asks the King's leave to employ a clerk, which being granted, the clerk proceeds in the lecture. It is very long. It contains much information, and many things very fine, but it is too long, has many repetitions, and too much compliment, and what the French call *emphase*. The plaudits were long, loud, and incessant. These will convince the King and Queen of the national sentiment, and tend to prevent the effects of the intrigue against the present administration, at least for a while. After this speech is over, the King rises to depart, and receives a long and affecting *Vive le Roi*. The Queen rises, and, to my great satisfaction, she hears for the first time in several mouths the sound of *Vive la Reine*. She makes a low courtesy, and this produces a louder acclamation, and that a lower courtesy.

'As soon as I can disengage myself from the crowd and find my servant, I go to where my carriage puts up, in order to proceed to Paris, being tolerably hungry, and not inclining to ask any one for a dinner, as I am convinced that more such requests will be made this day, than are agreeable to those who have dinners to bestow. I find that my horses are not harnessed, and that I am at a *traiteur's*. I ask for a dinner, and am shown into the room where there is a *table d'hôte*, and some of the *Tiers* are set down at it. We enter into conversation. Talk of the manner of voting. I tell them that I

think, when their constitution is formed, it will be well for them to vote *par ordre*, but in forming it to vote *par tête*. Those, who best understand the thing, incline to this opinion; but they are from Brittany; and one of them inveighs so strongly against the tyranny of the nobles, and attacks his brother so warmly, that the others come about; and one, a noble representing the *Tiers*, is so vociferous against his own order, that I am convinced he means to rise by his eloquence, and finally will, I expect, vote with the opinion of the Court, let that be what it may. I rise, and wish them very sincerely a perfect accord, and good understanding with each other, and set off for Paris.'

In a letter to Mrs Morris of Philadelphia, he gives additional sketches of this scene, which are still more graphic, and may help to fill up the picture.

'I had the honor to be present on the fifth of this month at the opening of the States-General; a spectacle more solemn to the mind, than gaudy to the eye. And yet, there was displayed everything of noble and of royal in this titled country. A great number of fine women, and a very great number of fine dresses, ranged round the Hall. On a kind of stage the throne; on the left of the King and a little below him the Queen; a little behind him to the right, and on chairs, the Princes of the blood; on the right and and left, at some distance from the throne, the various Princesses, with the gentlemen and ladies of their retinue. Advanced on the stage, to the left of the throne, the Keeper of the Seals. Several officers of the household, richly caparisoned, strewed about in different places. Behind the throne, a cluster of guards, of the largest size, dressed in ancient costumes, taken from the times of chivalry. In front of the throne on the right, below the stage, the Ministers of state, with a large table before them. On the opposite side of the Hall some benches, on which sat the Maréchals of France, and other great officers. In front of the Ministers, on benches facing the opposite side of the Hall, sat the Representatives of the Clergy, being priests of all

colors, scarlet, crimson, black, white, and gray, to the number of three hundred. In front of the Maréchals of France, on benches facing the Clergy, sat an equal number of Representatives of the Nobility, dressed in a robe of black, waistcoats of cloth of gold, and over their shoulders, so as to hang forward to their waists, a kind of lappels about a quarter of a yard wide at top, and wider at bottom, made of cloth of gold. On benches, which reached quite across the Hall, and facing the stage, sat the Representatives of the People clothed in black. In the space between the Clergy and Nobles, directly in front of the Representatives of the People, and facing the throne, stood the heralds at arms, with their staves and in very rich dresses.

'When the King entered, he was saluted with a shout of applause. Some time after he had taken his seat, he put on a round beaver, ornamented with white plumes, the part in front turned up, with a large diamond button in the centre. He read his speech well, and was interrupted at a part, which affected his audience, by a loud shout of *Vive le Roi*. After this had subsided, he finished his speech, and received again an animated acclamation of applause. He then took off his hat, and after a while put it on again, at which the Nobles also put on their hats, which resembled the King's, excepting the button. The effect of this display of plumage was fine.

'The Keeper of the Seals then performed his genuflexions to the throne, and mumbled out, in a very ungraceful manner, a speech of considerable length, which nobody pretends to judge of, because nobody heard it. He was succeeded by M. Necker, who soon handed his speech to his clerk, being unable to go through with it. The clerk delivered it much better than the Minister, and that is no great praise. It was three hours long, contained many excellent things, but too much of compliment, too much of repetition, and indeed too much of everything, for it was too long by two hours, and yet fell short in some capital points of great expectation. He received, however, very repeated plaudits from the audience, some of which were merited, but more were certainly paid to his

character, than to his composition. M. Necker's long speech now comes to a close, and the King rises to depart. The Hall resounds with a long loud *Vive le Roi*. He passes the Queen, who rises to follow him. At this moment some one, imbued with the milk of human kindness, originates a faint *Vive la Reine*. She makes a humble courtesy and presents the sinking of the high Austrian spirit; a livelier acclamation in return, and to this her lowlier bending, which is succeeded by a shout of loud applause. Here drops the curtain on the first great act of this great drama, in which Bourbon gives freedom. His courtiers seem to feel, what he seems to be insensible of, the pang of greatness going off.'

One of the immediate objects of Mr Morris's visit to France, was to prosecute and settle a claim of Robert Morris against the Farmers General for tobacco, shipped to them by contract. For reasons not necessary to be enumerated, the affair had become much involved, and after repeated and ineffectual attempts to bring about a compromise, Mr Morris at last determined on a suit at law. The case, in some of its forms, was to come before a bench of judges, whom he was advised to see in person, previously to its being committed to them. In company with a gentleman, who also had some concern in the transaction, he set out on this visit to the judges, and when it was finished, wrote down the following account of his adventures.

'*May 28th.*—He desires me to tell the judges, that I came over on purpose to settle the business now before them. I tell him that I cannot, because it is not true. This, says he, is of no consequence, for it will injure nobody. I tell him, that I cannot bring myself to lie, although it be not maliciously done, but he may, if he pleases, tell them so. He says he will, for that if I did not come on that account, I ought to. We first call on M. Etienne, a *bookseller*. He is not at home, and Laurent writes a message, I do not know what. Secondly, we call on M. le Camus Avard, a *woollen draper*. He also is from home, and Laurent writes a message. Thirdly, we

call on M. Magimel, a *goldsmith*, and have the honor to see him. He is to be relieved next month by M. Maillard, a *furrier*. However, we are to send him a *memoire*, because on *les affaires majeures* they generally confer together. He promises to expedite the matter. We then return to M. le C. who is to leave town this afternoon for Rouen, and has a great deal to do, but will despatch it immediately, and go with me to visit our other judges. Sit waiting for him in my carriage a long hour, and then at the door of it he talks with a man, (whom he has been long talking to already,) for several minutes. He gets in, and I tell him, in a manner which sufficiently shows vexation, that it is too late to visit any of these people, but we will go home and dine. He apologizes, and apprehending, I believe, that in my present temper we shall be bad company, declines my invitation, and gets out again.

'Return home and dine. At five resume my visits to my judges; and first wait upon the honorable M. Gillet, the *grocer*, who is in a little cuddy, adjoining his shop, at cards. He assures me, that the court are impartial, and alike uninfluenced by Farmers, Receivers, and Grand Seigneurs; that they are generally of the same opinion; that he will do everything in his power, and the like. *De l'autre coté*, perfect confidence in the integrity and ability of the court. Wish only to bring the cause to such a point, as that I may have the honor to present a *memoire*. Am vastly sorry to have been guilty of an intrusion upon the amusements of his leisure hours. Hope he will excuse the solicitude of a stranger, and patronize a claim of such evident justice. The whole goes off very well, though I with difficulty restrain my risible faculties. The coachman, who sees the respectfulness of my adieus at the shop door, is not quite so discreet.

'My next visit is to M. Maillard, the *vender of skins*. A chariot stopping at the door, and a servant in livery inquiring for him, without anything of the humble suitor in his countenance, brings his honor into the street. A world of apologies for my indiscretion; hope he will excuse it. He is so kind

as to receive my excuses very graciously, though I think he must be disappointed at receiving a client instead of a customer. Explain my object. He will do whatever may lie in his power. My last visit is to the honorable M. Servi, the *vintner*. He will take the earliest opportunity tomorrow to mention the matter to his brethren. I tell him that a confidence in the wise and impartial attention in the consulate, as also in the speediness of their decisions, have induced the suit, which gives him the trouble of my visit, and so forth. In reply, the desire of this nation to give the best reception to strangers, and, finally, that he already believes my cause to be good, and hopes he may not be disappointed. Certainly I must believe it good. A winter's passage of a thousand leagues is not undertaken on light ground, by a man of common understanding, and although there is doubtless every reason for confiding in the justice of the French, yet a stranger, opposed to a powerful Company, can never have the same opportunities and advantages; that, at present, I only supplicate for despatch, and shall do myself the honor at a future day to explain the grounds of my demand.

'Having got through this disagreeable scene, the ridicule of which is so strongly painted to my own eyes, that I cannot forbear laughing at myself, I call on Mr Jefferson to take him and his family to the garden of Monsieur, for which I have a ticket, but he is not at home.

'*May 30th.*—Dine with the Maréchal de Castries. In my way call on General Dalrymple, stay about five minutes, and by this means do not arrive till they are sitting down to table. After dinner explain to the Maréchal the affair of the claim set up against the Farm. He desires a note of it, which I am to make out and give him. I tell him that a man of sense, decision, and firmness, is necessary to the King in the present moment to extricate him from the difficulties in which they are plunged, also some rough sketch of the means. Call on Mr Jefferson and sit a good while. General conversation on characters and politics. I think he does not form very just

estimates of character, but rather assigns too many to the humble rank of fools; whereas in life the gradations are infinite, and each individual has his peculiarities of fort and foeble. Go to Madame de Flahaut's to spend the evenin g. Talk a good deal of loose, light nonsense, and at eleven o'clock come home.'

While the Maréchal de Castries was Minister of the Marine, he had read Mr Morris's two letters to the Marquis de Chastellux, on the commerce of the French Islands, and often spoke of them in terms of high approbation, which caused them to be read and commended by others. Of this the Marquis took care to give his friend due intelligence. The reputation acquired by these letters was valuable to him after his arrival in Paris.

'*June 3d.*—Go to Mr Jefferson's. Some political conversation. He seems to be out of hope of anything being done to purpose by the States-General. This comes from having sanguine expectation of a downright republican form of government. The literary people here, observing the abuses of their monarchical form, imagine that everything must go the better in proportion as it recedes from the present establishments, and in their closets they make men exactly suited to their systems; but unluckily they are such men as exist nowhere else, and least of all in France. I am more than ever persuaded that the form, which at first appeared to me most fit for them, is that which will be adopted; and exactly to my idea, but probably in a much better manner.

'*June 5th.*—Go to M. Hudon's. He has been waiting for me a long time. I stand for his statue of General Washington, being the humble employment of a manikin. This is literally taking the advice of St Paul, to be all things to all men. Promise M. Hudon to attend next Tuesday morning at half past eight to have my bust taken, which he desires, *to please himself*, for this is the answer to my question, what he wants with my bust.

'*June 6th.*—Dine with Mr Jefferson. He has just re-

ceived some news from America, where all is going on well. Sit pretty long at table and stay tea. At ten go to sup with Madame de Flahaut, who is ill, but eats supper, and is of course much worse after having eaten. The States-General seem to approach a little more towards accommodation. The Bishop of Autun, (Talleyrand) who is one of our company, and an intimate friend of Madame Flahaut, appears to me a sly, cool, cunning, ambitious, and malicious man. I know not why conclusions so disadvantageous to him are formed in my mind; but so it is, and I cannot help it.

'*June* 11*th*.—This morning I go to Reinsi. Arrive at eleven. Nobody yet visible. After some time the Dutchess (of Orleans) appears, and tells me, that she has given Madame de Chastellux notice of my arrival. This consists with my primitive idea. Near twelve before the breakfast is paraded; but, as I had eaten mine before my departure, this has no present inconvenience. After breakfast we go to mass in the chapel. In the tribune above, we have a Bishop, an Abbé, the Dutchess, her maids, and some of their friends. Madame de Chastellux is below on her knees. We are amused above by a number of little tricks played off by Monsieur de Ségur and Monsieur de Cabières with a candle, which is put into the pockets of different gentlemen, the Bishop's among the rest, and lighted, while they are otherwise engaged, (for there is a fire in the tribune,) to the great merriment of the spectators. Immoderate laughter is the consequence. The Dutchess preserves as much gravity as she can. This scene must be very edifying to the domestics, who are opposite to us, and the villagers who worship below. After this ceremony is concluded, we commence our walk, which is long and excessively hot. Then we get into batteaux, and the gentlemen row the ladies, which is by no means a cool operation. After that, more walking; so that I am excessively inflamed, even to fever heat. Get to the Château, and doze a little, *en attendant le dîné*, which does not come till after five. A number of persons surround the windows, and doubtless form a high idea of the

company to whom they are obliged to look up at an awful distance. Ah, did they but know how trivial the conversation, how very trivial the characters, their respect would soon be changed to an emotion extremely different.

'*June 12th.*—Mr Jefferson has been to Versailles. The *Tiers* have called on the Nobles and Clergy to join them and proceed to business, which has thrown the former into a rage. He considers the affairs of this country as being in a very critical situation. They are so; but the royal authority has yet great weight, and, if brought in to the aid of the privileged orders, may yet prevent their destruction. However, he and I differ in our systems of politics. He, with all the leaders of liberty here, is desirous of annihilating distinctions of order. How far such views may be right, respecting mankind in general, is, I think, extremely problematical. But, with respect to this nation, I am sure it is wrong, and cannot eventuate well.

'*June 19th.*—The Clergy have this day, by a small majority, determined to join the *Tiers*. This stroke is fatal to the *Noblesse*, for the *Tiers*, having already constituted themselves the *National Assembly*, as representing ninety-six hundredths of the nation, they will now have the claim to be a majority of orders also, as well as of heads. Unless the royal authority be interposed to save the Nobles, they are gone; and of this there seems to be but slender probability.

'M. de Boursac tells me, which is the aristocratic consolation, that the King has called a council on the present state of affairs, in which each is to deliver his opinion in his Majesty's presence. I do not believe, that this will produce any effect whatever; for the decision of this day will awe those, who, two days ago, would have been loud against M. Necker. And probably those who called, or rather prompted the call of this council, will find the event to be a direct reverse of their wishes and expectations.

'*June 20th.*—Go to club. Meet the Comte de Croix, Duc de Rochefoucauld, Vicomtes de Noailles and de Ségur, young Dillon, and sundry others. Various conjectures about the ob-

ject of the *Séance royale* to be held on Monday. I believe that this step would not have been taken, had the Court foreseen the step of the clergy yesterday. They have very inflammable materials to handle now, and must take good heed. The general idea seems to be, that this *Séance* is consequential upon what passed in the *Tiers*, when they assumed to themselves the title of *National Assembly*; but I conjecture that, however this incident may have precipitated that event, it originates in the idea of arranging the different corps in such way, as that they may act, instead of being as at present a useless herd.

'*June 23d.*—Go to Versailles and call on Monsieur de la Luzerne, but both he and his lady are out of town. Thence to Madame de Tessé's, who gives me a cordial reception, complaining, however, of my politics. The King has this day, in his *Séance royale*, pleased the Nobility, and very much displeased the *Tiers*. I find it difficult to learn exactly what has passed, but it seems to me, that the Nobility have less cause for exultation than they imagine. At dinner I sit next to Monsieur de Lafayette, who tells me that I injure the cause, for that my sentiments are continually quoted against the good party. I seize this opportunity to tell him, that I am opposed to the democracy from regard to liberty. That I see they are going headlong to destruction, and would fain stop them if I could. That their views respecting this nation are totally inconsistent with the materials of which it is composed; and that the worst thing, which could happen, would be to grant their wishes. He tells me, that he is sensible that his party are mad, and tells them so, but is not the less determined to die with them. I tell him, that I think it would be quite as well to bring them to their senses, and live with them. He says that he is determined to resign his seat, which step I approve of, because the instructions by which he is bound are contrary to his conscience. Before we part, I take an opportunity to tell him, that if the *Tiers* are now very moderate they will probably succeed; but, if violent, must inevitably fail.

'From hence go to Madame d'Angiviliers, who is not at home. Then call on the Duc de la Vauguyon, who is also abroad. Thence to Madame de Montoissieux's, where the party is aristocratical. Delighted with the King. In the course of conversation they tell me some anecdotes, which convince me that the King and Queen are confoundedly frightened; and I am thence led to conjecture, that the Court will still recede. M. Necker offered yesterday to resign, but the King refused to accept his resignation. This afternoon he waits on his Majesty, surrounded by the common people, who attend him with shouts of applause to the door of the Château. At half past seven, when I leave Versailles, he is still with the King.

'*July 3d.*—Cantellux is full of politics. He tells me, that I am frequently quoted by the aristocrats, as being of their party. This leads to an explanation of my opinions, in which we perfectly agree, and he appears glad of it. The conciliating point is an abolition of the parliaments, which I think essential to the establishment of freedom, justice, and order.

'*July 4th.*—Go to Mr Jefferson's to dinner. A large party of Americans, and among them Monsieur and Madame de Lafayette. Some political conversation with him after dinner, in which I urge him to preserve, if possible, some constitutional authority to the body of Nobles, as the only means of preserving any liberty for the people. The current is sitting so strong against the Noblesse, that I apprehend their destruction, in which will, I fear, be involved consequences most pernicious, though little attended to in the present moment.

'*July 11th.*—The King, in answer to the States respecting the troops, has told them that he had no intentions to affect them, and if their apprehensions continue, he will remove the session of the States to Soissons, or Noyons, and go himself to Compiegne. This is an artful reply. If he can get them far from Paris, he will weaken that impulse, which at present creates such alarm. But the evil lies deeper than his counsellors are aware of, and the business now broached must have its complete course.

'*July* 12*th*.—Dine with the Maréchal de Castries, who inquires very kindly the state of my business. I tell him that I am about to conclude an indirect agreement, because *un mauvais accommodement vaut mieux qu'un bon procès*. He agrees in this sentiment, and is glad that my voyage has not been wholly fruitless. He tells me that he is in town for a few days, which he devotes to business, and therefore inquires how mine goes on. As I am going away, he takes me aside, and informs me that M. Necker is no longer in place. He is much affected at this intelligence, and indeed so am I. I urge him to go immediately to Versailles. He says he will not; that they have undoubtedly taken all their measures before this moment, and therefore he must be too late. I tell him that it is not too late to warn the King of his danger, which is infinitely greater than he imagines. That his army will not fight against the nation, and that, if he listens to violent counsels, the nation will undoubtedly be against him; that the sword has fallen imperceptibly from his hand; and that the sovereignty of this nation is in the *Assemblée Nationale*. He makes no precise answer to this, but is very deeply affected. He tells me, that if he stays longer in town, he will inform me, that we may see each other again.

'Learn that the whole administration are routed, and M. Necker banished. Much alarm here. Paris begins to be in commotion, and from the invalid guard of the Louvre a few of the mobility take a drum and beat to arms. Monsieur de Narbonne, the friend of Madame de Staël, considers a civil war inevitable, and is about to join his regiment, being, as he says, in a conflict between the dictates of his duty and his conscience. I tell him, that I know of no duty, but that which conscience dictates. I presume that his conscience will dictate to join the strongest side. The little Abbé, Bertrand, after sallying out in a *fiacre*, returns frightened, because of a large mob in the Rue St Honoré; and presently comes in another Abbé, who is of the parliament, and who, rejoicing inwardly at the change, is confoundedly frightened at the commotions. I calm the

fears of Madame de Flahaut, whose husband is mad, and in a printed list, it seems, of the furious aristocrats.

'Offer to conduct the Abbés safely home, which offer Bertrand accepts. His terror as we go along is truly diverting. As we approach the Rue St Honoré, his imagination magnifies the ordinary passengers into a vast mob, and I can scarcely persuade him to trust his eyes, instead of his fears. Having set him down, I depart for Mr Jefferson's. In riding along the Boulevards, all at once the carriages, horses, and foot passengers turn about and pass rapidly. Presently after, we meet a body of cavalry, with their sabres drawn, and coming at half speed. After they have passed us a little way, they stop. When we come to the *Place Louis Quinze*, I observe the people, to the number of perhaps of one hundred, picking up stones, and, looking back, find that the cavalry are returning. Stop at the angle to see the fray if any. The people take post among the stones, which lie scattered about the whole place, being there hewn for the bridge now building. The officer at the head of this party is saluted by a stone, and immediately turns his horse in a menacing manner towards the assailant. But his adversaries are posted on ground where the cavalry cannot act. He pursues his route, therefore, and the pace is soon increased to a gallop, amid a shower of stones. One of the soldiers is either knocked from his horse, or the horse falls under him. He is taken prisoner, and at first ill treated. They had fired several pistols, but without effect. Probably they were not even charged with ball. A party of the Swiss guards are posted in the Champs-Elysées with cannon.

'Proceed to Mr Jefferson's. He tells me that M. Necker received yesterday about noon a letter from the King, by the hands of Monsieur de la Luzerne, in which he orders him to leave the kingdom; and at the same time Monsieur de la Luzerne is desired to exact a promise, that he will not mention the matter to anybody. M. Necker dines, and proposes to his wife a visit to a female friend in the neighborhood. On

the route, he communicates the intelligence, and they go to a country seat, make the needful arrangements, and depart. M. de Montmorin immediately resigned, and is in Paris.

'In returning from Mr Jefferson's, I am turned off to the left by the vidette, posted on the road to the *Place Louis Quinze*. Go to club. A gentleman just arrived from Versailles gives us an account of the new administration. The people are employed in breaking open the armorer's shops, and presently a large body of the *Gardes Françaises* appear with bayonets fixed in the garden, mingled with the mob, some of whom are also armed. These poor fellows have passed the Rubicon, with a witness. Success, or a halter, must now be their motto. I think the Court will again recede; and, if they do, all further efforts will be idle. If they do not, a civil war is among the events most probable. If the Representatives of the *Tiers* have formed a just estimate of their constituents, in ten days all France will be in commotion. The little affray, which I have just witnessed, will probably be magnified into a bloody battle before it reaches the frontiers, and, in that case, an infinity of *corps-bourgeois* will march to the relief of the capital. They had better gather in the harvest.

'*July* 13*th*.—Martin comes in and tells me, that the Hotel de Force is forced, and all the prisoners out. Presently after, a letter is brought to him, enclosing one for me from Mr Nesbitt, who is at the Temple, and wishes to see me; but my cocher tells me he cannot bring my carriage, having already been stopped and turned back. In fact, the city of Paris is in as fine a tumult as any one could wish. They are getting arms wherever they can find any. Seize sixty barrels of powder on the Seine. Break into the Monastery of St Lazar and find a store of grain, which the holy brotherhood had laid in. Immediately it is put into carts and sent to the market, and on every cart a Friar. The *Garde Meuble du Roi* is attacked, and the arms are delivered up, to prevent worse consequences. These, however, are more curious than useful.

But the detail of the variety of this day's deeds would be endless.

'Dine at home, and la Caze dines with me. After dinner dress and walk to the Louvre, having previously ornamented my hat with a green bough, in honor of the *Tiers*, for this is the fashion of the day, which everybody is obliged to comply with, who means to march in peace. It is somewhat whimsical, that this day of violence and tumult is the only one in which I have dared to walk the streets; but as no carriages are abroad but the *fiacres*, I do not hazard being crushed, and I apprehend nothing from the populace.

'*July 14th.*—While sitting here, a person comes and announces the taking of the Bastile, the Governor of which is beheaded, and the *Prévôt des Marchands* is killed, and also beheaded. They are carrying the heads in triumph through the city. The carrying of this citadel is among the most extraordinary things, that I have met with. It cost the assailants sixty men, it is said. The *Hotel Royal des Invalides* was forced this morning, and the cannon, small arms, &c. brought off. The citizens are by these means well armed; at least there are the materials for about thirty thousand to be equipped with, and that is a sufficient army. I find that the information received last night, as to the *arrêté* of the *Assemblée Nationale*, is not just. They have only declared, that the last administration carry with them the regret of the chamber; that they will persist in insisting on the removal of the troops; and that his Majesty's advisers, whatever their rank and station, are guilty of all the consequences which may ensue. Yesterday it was the fashion at Versailles, not to believe that there were any disturbances at Paris. I presume that this day's transactions will induce a conviction, that all is not perfectly quiet.

'*July 15th.*—The Duc d'Aiguillon and Baron de Menou are at club, both of them deputies of the Noblesse. I learn through, and from them, the secret history of the revolution of this day. Yesterday evening an address was presented by the Assembly, to which his Majesty returned an answer by no

means satisfactory. The Queen, Count d'Artois, and Dutchess de Polignac had been all day tampering with two regiments, which were made almost drunk, and every officer was presented to the King, who was induced to give promises, money, &c. to these regiments. They shouted *Vive la Reine*, *Vive le Comte d'Artois*, *Vive la Duchesse de Polignac*, and their music came and played under her Majesty's window. In the mean time, the Maréchal de Broglio was tampering in person with the artillery. The plan was to reduce Paris by famine, and to take two hundred members of the National Assembly prisoners. But they found, that the troops would not serve against their country. Of course these plans would not be carried into effect. They took care, however, not to inform the King of all the mischiefs. At two o'clock in the morning, the Duc de Liancourt went into his bed-chamber and waked him. Told him all. Told him that he pledged his life on the truth of his narration, and that, unless he changed his measures speedily, all was lost. The King took his determination. The Bishop d'Autun, they say, was called on to prepare *un discours;* which he did. The orders were given for dispersing the troops. And at the meeting of the Assembly, the King, accompanied by his two brothers and the Captain of his guard, came in and made his speech. This produced very enthusiastic emotions of joy, and he was reconducted to the Château by the whole Assembly, and by all the inhabitants of Versailles. They tell me, that the Baron de Bezenvald is *denoncé* by the *Assemblée Nationale*, which appellation the King recognises in his *discours*, that they will pursue the present Ministry, &c. &c. I give my opinion, that, after what is passed, the Count d'Artois should not be suffered to stay in France. In this they agree. They say, that they will *faire le procès* of the Maréchal de Broglio, and probably of the Baron de Breteuil. It is said that the King is to be in town at eleven o'clock tomorrow. But for what?

'*July* 17*th*.—This morning my coachman tells me, that there

are placards up forbidding any carriages to run, as the King is to be in town this day between ten and eleven o'clock. Here then is another day, in which nothing will be done. Dress immediately and go out. Get at a window in the Rue St Honoré, through which the procession is to pass. In squeezing through the crowd, my pocket is picked of a handkerchief, which I value far beyond what the thief will get for it; and I would willingly pay him for his dexterity, could I retrieve it. We wait from eleven till four. It seems that his Majesty was escorted by the militia of Versailles to the *Point de Jour*, where he entered the double file of Parisian Militia, which extends from thence to the *Hotel de Ville*, each line composed of three ranks, consequently it is a body six deep extending that distance. The *Assemblée Nationale* walk promiscuously together in the procession. The King's horse-guards, some of the *Gardes du Corps*, and all those who attend him, have the cockades of the city, viz. red and blue. It is a magnificent procession in every respect.

'*July 19th.*—The painter shows us a piece he is now about for the King, taken from the Ænead; Venus restraining the arm, which is raised in the temple of the vestals to shed the blood of Helen. I tell him, that he had better paint the storm of the Bastile. It will be a more fashionable picture, and that one trait will admit of a fine effect. It is one of the *Gardes Françaises*, who, having got hold of the gate, and unable to bring it down, cries to his comrades of the populace, to pull by his legs; and this man has the force and courage to hold, while a dozen of them pull him like a rope and bring down the gate; so that he actually sustains the rack. To represent him drawn out of joint, with his head turned round encouraging them to draw still harder, must, I think, have a fine effect. L'Eveque d'Autun agrees with me entirely in the sentiment. I recommend a subscription to collect the various papers found in the Bastile, and then to employ an able hand to write the annals of that diabolical castle, from the beginning of Louis the Fourteenth's reign to the present moment. Some-

thing of this sort will, I believe, be done. Give the hint also of forming the *Gardes Françaises* into a city guard, with very high pay; and to keep up the corps, by putting into it all those, who by good conducts hall have merited something more than the rank of a common soldier, without being qualified for that of a sergeant.

'*July 20th.*—Go to the Hotel de Ville, and with much difficulty find out the Marquis de Lafayettte, who is exhausted by a variety of attentions. Tell him I will send his letters to America, and that he must give me a passport to visit the Bastile. Agree to dine with him, on condition that I may bring my own wine. Return home, write, and about four go to the Hotel de Lafayette. Find there Madame, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, and others. Dine. He gives me my passport. Suggest my plan respecting the *Gardes Françaises*, which he likes. Advise him to have a complete plan for the militia prepared, aud to submit it to the Committee. Ask him if he can think of any steps, which may be taken, to induce the King to confer on him the government of the Isle of France. He tells me, that he would prefer that of Paris simply, that he has the utmost power his heart could wish, and is grown tired of it; that he has commanded absolutely a hundred thousand men, has marched his Sovereign about the streets as he pleased; prescribed the degree of applause, which he should receive, and could have detained him prisoner, had he thought proper. He wishes, therefore, as soon as possible, to return to private life.

'*July 22d.*—After dinner, walk a little under the arcade of the Palais Royal, waiting for my carriage. In this period the head and body of M. de Toulon are introduced in triumph. The head on a pike, the body dragged naked on the earth. Afterwards, this horrible exhibition is carried through the different streets. His crime is, to have accepted a place in the Ministry. This mutilated form of an old man of seventy-five is shown to his son-in-law, Bertier, the Intendant of Paris; and, afterwards, he also is put to death and cut to pieces, the

populace carrying about the mangled fragments with a savage joy. Gracious God, what a people!'

In the first part of August Mr Morris made a tour to London, taking the route of Dieppe and Brighton. He had returned to Paris on the 13th of September.

'*September* 16*th*, 1789.—This morning set off for Versailles. Alight at the door of Monsieur de la Luzerne.* Neither he nor Madame at home. Madame de Montmorin not yet visible, and Monsieur *occupé*.† Visit at Madame de Tessé's. She is abroad, but Madame de Tot is visible at her toilette. Some conversation on their affairs, by which I find, that opinions change. Return to Monsieur de Montmorin's to dine. She is much afflicted by the state of affairs. Madame de Ségur comes in with her brothers. She is in great anxiety. Apprehends that the King will fly. I tell her, that his flight appears to be impracticable. She thinks it will set Paris in a flame. There is no conjecturing the consequences. A prince so weak can influence very little, either by his presence or absence. After dinner, we have a conversation on politics with some of the Deputies, in which I endeavor to show them the absurdity of their suspensive veto, and the probable tyranny of their single chamber. I had better have let this alone; but zeal always gets the better of prudence.

'*September* 17*th*.—Go to Mr Jefferson's. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld comes in from the States-General, and at half past four Lafayette, when we sit down to dinner. He tells us, that some of the troops under his command are about to march tomorrow to Versailles, to urge the decisions of the States-General. This is a rare situation, for which they must thank themselves. I ask him, if his troops will

---

* The Count de la Luzerne, brother to the Ambassador in England, and at that time Minister of the Marine.

† M. de Montmorin was Minister of Foreign Affairs. Mr Jefferson says of him, that he was 'one of the most honest and worthy of human beings.'

obey him. He says, they will not mount guard when it rains; but he thinks that they would readily follow him into action. I incline to think, that he will have an opportunity of making the experiment. Mention to him my desire to confer on the subject of subsistence. He says, that I must come and dine with him, but this is idle, if I am rightly informed; because he has generally a crowd, and is but a few minutes at home.

'*September 26th.*—This morning at five I rise and dress, but my carriage does not come till half past six. Drive smartly, arrive at the door of the National Assembly at eight. By this means am still in time, and get well seated immediately behind my friend. At ten the session is opened. Some trifling matter of presents to the Assembly, called the gifts of patriotism, but more properly the sacrifices to vanity. After these a tedious verbal controversy on the reduction of yesterday's minutes. Much heat, and noise, and impatience, by which means half an hour is employed in what ought to have been settled in half a minute. The Marquis de Montesquiou makes his report. Vast respect for the *Premier Ministre des Finances*, and then sundry details and combinations, which show that the committee understand the business much better than the Minister. At the close, however, of the report, there is a feebleness, which they are not, perhaps, fully aware of, or perhaps it was unavoidable. They appeal to patriotism for aid; but they should in money matters apply only to interest. They should never acknowledge such want of resource, as to render the aid of patriotism necessary.

'After the report is read, the Comte de Mirabeau objects to the consideration of it, and insists that they should immediately take up M. Necker's proposition, on which he has a motion to make. He is called to the *Tribune*, and in a style of fine irony urges the immediate adoption of the plan proposed by the *Premier Ministre*, from the blind confidence which the Assembly have in him, and from the unbounded popularity which he enjoys. These, says he, in that dreadful situation which he has exposed, and in the imminency of danger, which

precludes debate, urge, nay command, us to adopt, without examination, what the Minister has devised for our relief. Let us then agree to it *literally, (textullement)* and, if it succeeds, let him, as he ought, enjoy the glory. If it fails which Heaven forefend, we will then exercise our talents in trying to discover, if yet there remain any means to save our country.

'To my great astonishment, the Representatives of this nation, who pique themselves on being the modern Athenians, are ready to swallow this proposition by acclamation. The President, Clermont de Tonnerre, who perceives its tendency, throws into a different form the style of adoption. Mirabeau immediately rises, and very adroitly parries the stroke, by showing that this form is not consistent with his view, which the Assembly appeared willing to comply with; that certainly a subject of such magnitude should not be carried by acclamation, without having the specific form before them; and, if he were to propose a form, it would require at least a quarter of an hour to consider and prepare it. He is immediately (by acclamation) ordered to *redact* his proposition, and while he is about it, the Bishop d'Autun retires. We remark it. My friend acknowledges that they are in league together. The world already suspects that union. During their absence, there is a great deal of noisy debate on various subjects, if, indeed such controversy may be dignified with the name of debate. At length, Mirabeau returns and brings his motion forward in consistence with his original idea. The Assembly now perceive the trap, and, during the tumult, Lally de Tollendal proposes, that the motion be sent to the Committee of Finances to frame and act (*Arrêté*). Here again Mirabeau manœuvres to evade that *coup*. And while the House are hung up in their judgment, or rather entangled from the want of judgment, d'Espresmenil makes a motion coincident with that of Mirabeau in substance, though contrarient in form. There is not sufficient confidence in him, and, therefore, his proposition drops. But it would seem from thence, that he

is in the faction with d'Autun and Mirabeau, or that the same principle of hatred to Necker has operated a coincidence of conduct on the present occasion. After this, tumult and noise continue to reign. Mirabeau at length, in another speech, openly declares his disapprobation of Necker's plan. It is moved to postpone the consideration of the subject at three o'clock; but that motion is lost. At half past three my friend goes away, and about four I retire extremely fatigued, in the belief that Mirabeau's motion cannot possibly be adopted, and that they will postpone at last the consideration.

'Go to Madame d' Tessé's. She is at the *Assemblée*. Madame de Tot is so kind as to order some bread and wine for me, *en attendant le dîné*. At length the Comtesse de Tessé arrives at five. Madame de Staël is with her. I had nearly told this last my opinion of Necker's plan before I knew her. The Assembly are voting on the adoption. The proposition not essentially different from that of Mirabeau; and thus they are the dupes. He has urged, they say, a decision with the eloquence of Demosthenes. While we are at dinner, the Count de Tessé and some members arrive. The adoption is carried *hollow*; at which Necker's friend rejoice. Madame de Staël is in raptures. She is pleased with the conduct of Mirabeau, which she says was perhaps the only way of bringing such a wrongheaded body to act rightly. That the only thing they could do was to comply with her father's wish, and there can be no doubt of the success of his plans. Bravo!

'After dinner, (Madame de Tessé having told her that I am *un homme d'esprit*,) she singles me out and makes *a talk*. Asks if I have not written a book on the American constitution. "*Non, Madame, j'ai fait mon devoir en assistant à la formation de cette Constitution.*" "*Mais, Monsieur, votre conversation doit être très intéressante, car je vous entend cité de toute part.*" "*Ah, Madame, je ne suis pas digne de cet éloge.*" How I lost my leg? It was unfortunately not in the military service of my country. "*Monsieur, vous avez l'air très*

imposant," and this is accompanied with that look, which, without being what Sir John Falstaff calls the "leer of invitation," amounts to the same thing. I answer affirmatively, and would have left the matter there; but she tells me, that Monsieur de Chastellux often spoke of me. This leads us on, but in the midst of the chat arrive letters, one of which is from her lover (Narbonne) now with his regiment. It brings her to a little recollection, which, I think, a little time will again banish. She enters into a conversation with Madame de Tessé, who reproves most pointedly the approbation she gave to Mirabeau, and the ladies become at length animated to the utmost bound of politeness.

'*October 5th.*—Go towards Chaillot to see what is doing, but am stopped at the Pont Royal. Go into the Tuileries. A host of women are gone towards Versailles with some cannon. A strange manœuvre! Walk up to Mr Short's. He is just going out to dine. We return together to the *Place Louis Quinze*. This tumult is the continuation of last night. A wild, mad enterprise. Go to the arsenal. Admitted with difficulty. They are at dinner. Madame Lavoisier is detained in town, as all carriages are stopped, and the ladies obliged to join the female mob. While we sit at table, we learn that the militia and the *Régiment National* are marching towards Versailles. Return home and dress. At eight o'clock go to the Louvre. Capellis says that the *Régiment de Flandre, the Milice de Versailles*, and the *Gardes du Corps* are determined to give the Parisians a warm reception. Lafayette has marched by compulsion, guarded by his own troops, who suspect and threaten him. Dreadful situation! Obliged to do what he abhors, or suffer an ignominious death, with the certainty that the sacrifice of his life will not prevent the mischief.

'A gentleman tells us an ancedote, which shows how well this nation is adapted to the enjoyment of freedom. He walked near a knot of people collected together, where an orator was haranguing. The substance of his oration was, "*Mes-*

sieurs, nos manquons du pain, et voici la raison. Il n'y'a que trois jours que le Roi a eu ce veto suspensif, et déja les aristocrats ont achetés des suspensions, et envoyes les grains hors du Royaume." To this sensible and profound *discours*, his audience gave a hearty assent. "*Ma foi, il a raison. Ce n'est que ça.*" Oh rare! These are the modern Athenians! alone learned, alone wise, alone polite, and the rest of mankind barbarians!

'*October 6th.*—Paris is all in a tumult. Two heads of the *Gardes du Corps* are brought to town. The Royal Family, who are in possession of the *Régiment National*, late *Gardes Françaises*, are to come this afternoon.

'*Evening.*—Capellis gives us a recital of what has passed. Many circumstances of insult to the royal personages. The Queen obliged to fly from the bed in her undress, with her stockings in her hand, to the King's chamber for protection, being pursued by the *Poissardes*. At the *Hotel de Ville*, M. Bailli, in reading the King's speech, omitted in some parts the words, *avec confiance*. The Queen corrected him, which produced a shout of *Vive la Reine*. They are to lodge in the chambers fitted up in the Tuileries. The Queen, in retiring to her chamber, told her attendants, that, as the King was determined to go to Paris, she must accompany him, but she should never leave it. Poor lady! This is a sad presage of what is too likely.

'*October 8th.*—Proceed to Monsieur de Lafayette's. He is surrounded. In conference with Clermont de Tonnerre. Madame de Lafayette, M. de Stael, and M. de S. his friend are *en Comité* in the *salon*. This is all *petit*. Mr Short is there. I take a few minutes to tell Lafayette what appears necessary, as to a change of administration. He has spoken to Mirabeau already. I regret it. He thinks of taking one Minister from each party. I tell him, that he must have men of talents and firmness, and, for the rest, it is no matter. Am to dine with him tomorrow and converse on the subject.

'I go to the Louvre. Capellis is there. Madame takes

the Bishop (d'Autun) and me out, which surprises Capellis not a little. We converse pretty fully on the arrangement of a Ministry. The getting rid of Necker is a *sine quâ non* with the Bishop, who wants his place. Indeed, I am of the same opinion. He gives me every assurance I can wish respecting Lafayette. After arranging the new Ministry, we come to the finance, the means of restoring credit, &c. Consider his plan respecting the property of the Church. He is bigoted to it, and the thing is well enough ; but the mode is not so well. He is attached to this, *as an author*, which is not a good symptom for a man of business.

' *October* 11*th*.—This morning at nine I go to the Marquis de Lafayette's. He is engaged with a gentleman in his closet a long time, who at length comes out and Lafayette with him. I find that he wishes to avoid coming to any points, as to a new administration, therefore carelessly ask him, if he has thought on the subject of our last conversation. This leads us on. I state to him the present situation of France, and the necessity of combining men of talents, who have principles favorable to liberty. That, without talents, the opportunity of regaining executive authority will be lost, and that, without proper principles, the authority when recovered will be abused. That he cannot possibly act both as Minister and soldier, still less as Minister of every department. That he must have coadjutors in whom he can confide. That as to the objections he has made, on the score of morals in some, he must consider that men do not go into an administration as the direct road to Heaven. That they are prompted by ambition or avarice, and therefore, that the only way to secure the most virtuous is, by making it their interest to act rightly. He tells me, that he means to introduce Maelsherbes as *Garde des Sceaux*, and to the objection that he will not be induced to accept, the reply is, that he will accept from Monsieur de Lafayette. I have a stronger objection, which I do not choose to make, viz. that he is not sufficiently a man of business, although certainly well informed, and possessed of a great deal of understand-

ing. He mentions la Rochefoucauld as Minister of Paris, and to the objection that he has not the needful talents, he answers, that he will give him a *premier commis* who has. The Minister of War is in the same situation. But they cannot carry their *commis* with them into the Council to deliberate and judge.

'After supper the Bishop d'Autun comes in, and the rest go away. I then tell him what has passed with Lafayette, as far as is proper, and my future intention, which is to tell him that, having done my duty to him and to his country, I quit the matter, and leave him to the course of events. I urge the union of those, who are to form the new Ministry, and that they avow themselves to the people as candidates, and let the Court know, that they will come in together, or not at all. He thinks this right, and also that the present circumstances have sufficient force to consume another administration, before things are entirely fixed. He reads to us his motion. It is well done. Afterwards, we talk about the best ways and means to effect the intended objects, and I give him a few hints on general principles, tending to the wealth and happiness of a nation, and founded on the sentiments of the human heart.

'*October 12th.*—The arrangement talked of at present for an administration is, to make Necker *Premier*, the Bishop d'Autun Minister of Finance, and Liancourt Minister of War. Mirabeau (who had yesterday four hours conversation, not with the King, but with *Monsieur*, and who is to see the King this day) wishes to be in the Ministry. An embassy will no longer content him.'

LETTER FROM MR MORRIS TO GENERAL LAFAYETTE.

'Paris, October 16th, 1789.

'My Dear Sir,

'I took the liberty in some late conversations to give you my sentiments on public affairs. I know the folly of offering opinions, which bear the appearance of advice, but a regard for you, and the sincerest wishes for the prosperity of this kingdom, pushed me beyond the line, which caution would have drawn

for one of less ardent temper. I do not wish you to consider this as an apology. On the contrary, I desire you to recollect, both now and hereafter, the substance of those conversations. In that progress of events, which rapidly advances, you will judge my judgment.

'I am convinced, that the proposed Constitution cannot serve for the government of this country; that the National Assembly, late the object of enthusiastic attachment, will soon be treated with disrespect; that the extreme licentiousness of your people will render it indispensable to increase the royal authority; that under such circumstances the freedom and happiness of France must depend on the wisdom, integrity and firmness of his Majesty's counsels, and, consequently, that the ablest and best men should be added to the present administration; that, so far as regards yourself, you should take care that those, who come in, be sensible of the obligation they owe you, disposed to repay it, and of a temper neither to desert you, nor their sovereign, nor each other, in the moment of danger, or for the sake of advantage. I consider the present time as critical, and that if neglected many inseparable mischiefs must ensue.

'Such are the bodings of a mind, not easily ruffled nor alarmed, but feelingly alive to the interests of friendship, and devotedly attached to the liberties of mankind. Certainly you have much better means of information than I have. Certainly you have that intimate knowledge of your own nation, which it is impossible for a stranger to acquire. And most certainly you have perfect acquaintance with the characters, which stand forward for public observation. Let what I have said therefore go for nothing. I have repeated it here, as being in some sort the needful introduction to what I am now to communicate.

'Last evening, in company with some of our friends, who supposed me to enjoy a share of your confidence, in which I assured them, with great truth, that they were mistaken, I was urged to visit and entreat you not to go into the Council. Knowing how much you are occupied, and how improper it is

for me to interfere, I declined the visit, but was at length prevailed on by earnest entreaty to promise, that I would in a letter assign the reasons, which influence them, and which are, first, that your present command must of necessity engross your time, and require undissipated attention, and in consequence that you must fail in the duty either of Minister or General. Secondly, that when in Council your opinions will not have more weight, and perhaps less, than they have at present, because at present, they are respected as coming from you, but will only be received in Council according to the reasons adduced in their support, and it is not always that the wisest man is the most eloquent. Thirdly, if your opinions do not prevail, you will have the mortification to sanction by your presence the measures, which you disapprove, or quit in disgust the seat, which you have taken. Fourthly, if your opinions prevail, you will then in your quality of General be called on to execute what in your quality of councillor you have ordained. In this situation the public opinion will revolt unless it be subdued. The one will ruin you, and the other your country. Fifthly, the jealousy and suspicion inseparable from tumultuous revolutions, and which have already been maliciously pointed against you, will certainly follow all your future steps, if you appear to be too strictly connected with the court. The foundations of your authority will then crumble away, and you will fall the object of your own astonishment. Sixthly, the retreat of the Duke of Orleans is attributed to you, and if you go into the Council immediately after what is called by some his flight, and by others his banishment, the two events will be coupled in a manner particularly disadvantageous and disagreeable. Seventhly, if you go into the Ministry with Mirabeau, or about the same time, every honest Frenchman will ask himself the cause of what he will call a very strange coalition. There are in this world men, who are to be employed, not trusted. Virtue must ever be sullied by an alliance with vice. And liberty will blush at her introduction, if led by a hand polluted. Lastly, I am earnestly, most earnestly, request-

ed by those who love you well, to add one caution as to your friends. Trust those who had that honor before the twelfth of July. New friends are zealous, they are ardent, they are attentive, but they are seldom true.

'Excuse the liberty of an old one, who is truly yours,

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

October 18th.—Converse about the intended changes in the administration. I insist that Mirabeau be not brought into the Council. That they are mistaken in supposing that he can, after that elevation, preserve his influence in the Assembly. That introducing a man of such bad character will injure them in the public opinion; and that everything depends, in the present moment, upon the preservation of that opinion. The Bishop (d'Autun) tells me that, in his opinion, no administration can work well, in which M. Necker has a share. After he is gone, Madame tells me, that Lafayette is determined not to let Montesquiou come into the war department. This Mirabeau told the Bishop. And Montesquiou told her that Necker declares that the calculations in the Bishop's motion are pitiful. This accounts for his opinion delivered to me. Lafayette has committed a great blunder in opening himself to Mirabeau. If he employs him, it will be disgraceful; and, if he neglects him, it will be dangerous, because every conversation gives him rights and means.

'*November 1st.*—At five, I visit the Marquis de Lafayette. He tells me that he has followed my advice, though he did not answer my letter. I congratulate him on what passed two days ago from a gentleman to the Count de Mirabeau, which was so pointedly affrontive as to ruin him, because he cannot be now placed in the Ministry, and is lost in the opinion of the Assembly. He asks, with eagerness, if I think he is lost with them. I reply, that the Bishop d'Autun has just expressed that opinion to me. He says that he does not know the Bishop much, but should be glad to know him more. I offer to give them a dinner together the day after tomorrow.

Or, if he does not choose it, I will say nothing about the matter. He desires me to say nothing of it; because, if he should dine with me, instead of dining at home, it would make an *histoire*, which is true. He wishes me, however, to bring the Bishop to breakfast with him the day after tomorrow. I promise to invite him.

'*November 3d.*—This morning, at half past eight, the Bishop d'Autun calls on me and we breakfast. He tells me, that Monsieur de Poix is to visit Monsieur de Lafayette this morning, in order to make terms for Mirabeau, We talk a little about Monsieur de Lafayette, his worth, and what he is worth. At nine, go to visit him. The cabriolet of Monsieur de Poix is at the porte, whence we know he is there. Monsieur de Lafayette is closeted with him. A great many visiters and affairs render the moments for our conversation short. Lafayette makes professions of esteem, and desires to receive frequent visits. There is an *émeute* in the Fauxbourg St Antoine about bread, which leads to a consideration of the means to supply Paris. Lafayette proposes a committee, consisting of three Ministers, three of the municipality of Paris, and three members of the *Etats-Genereux*, and says there is a man who, acting under such a committee, can secure the supplies. The Bishop thinks that the Assembly will not meddle. I am sure they will not, because they act only from fear, and will not risk the consequence of being responsible for the subsistence of this city.

'Lafayette asks the Bishop what he thinks of a new Ministry. He says that nobody, but M. Necker, can sustain the famine and bankruptcy, which appear unavoidable. Lafayette asks, if he does not think it would be right to prepare a Ministry for some months hence. The Bishop thinks it would. They discuss characters a little, and, as *par hazard*, Lafayette asks, whether Mirabeau's influence in the Assembly is great, to which the Bishop replies, that it is not enormous. The Bishop says that he cannot think of a new Ministry unless the change is entire. Lafayette agrees to this,

and says, that in this moment the friends of liberty ought to unite and understand each other. At coming away, the Bishop observes that Lafayette has no fixed plan, which is true.

'*November 4th.*—Go to Madame de Staël's, in consequence of her invitation of yesterday. A great deal of *bel esprit.* The Bishop declined coming this morning, when I asked him at Madame de Flahaut's. I think that in my life I never saw such exuberant vanity, as that of Madame de Staël upon the subject of her father. Speaking of the opinion of the Bishop d'Autun on the church property, which he has lately printed, not having had an opportunity to deliver it in the Assembly, she says that it is excellent, it is admirable, in short, that there are two pages in it, which are worthy of M. Necker. Afterwards, she said, that wisdom is a very rare quality, and that she knows of no one who possesses it in a superlative degree, excepting her father.

'*November 20th.*—This morning I rise early and go to the *Assemblée.* Stay there till four. A tedious session, from which I derive a violent headache. Mirabeau and Dupont are the two speakers on M. Necker's plan, who command the most attention, but neither of them, in my opinion, derives honor from the manner of treating it. Probably it will be adopted; and, if so, it will be, I think, fatal to their finances, and completely derange them for some time to come.

'Go to Madame de Staël's and sup. I give her my opinion of the speeches of this morning, and show one or two things, in which M. Dupont was mistaken. She does not like this, because he supported her father's plan, which she declares to be necessary.

'*December 4th.*—Go to Madame de Staël's. Music here. She sings. After supper Narbonne tells us, that he is authorised by *Franche Comté* to accuse the *Comité des Recherches.* This committee is very like what was called in the state of New York *the Tory Committee,* of which Duer was a leading member; a committee for detecting and defeating all conspi-

racies, &c. &c. Thus it is that mankind in similar situations always adopt a correspondent conduct.—I had some conversation before supper with the Count de Ségur, who disapproves of the Bishop's oration ; and so, indeed, do most others. And they blame particularly those things, which I had advised him to alter. He has something of the *author* about him. But the tender attachment to our literary productions is by no means suitable to a Minister. To sacrifice great objects for the sake of small ones is an inverse ratio of moral proportion.

'*December 26th.*—At club a member of the Committee of Finances mentions, that the totality of the public debt here is about 4,700,000,000 livres, including herein all reimbursements of charges of every kind, and calculating the *Viagerés* at ten years' purchase. That it may amount, perhaps, to 4,800,000,000 livres : that is, to 200,000,000 sterling. This then is the extreme of a burden, which this kingdom totters under. The Abbé d'Espagnac insists, that it is not so much by a great deal. While the dispute on this subject is at the height, a gentleman arrives, who communicates the extraordinary intelligence that *Monsieur*, the king's brother, has been to the Communes, and made a speech on the subject of a charge circulated against him yesterday, that he was at the head of the supposed plot against Monsieur Bailli and Monsienr de Lafayette.—Go to Madame de Chastellux's. While there, the Chevalier de Graave brings us *Monsieur's* speech. It is very well written ; but has the fault of calling himself a citizen, and again, his audience fellow citizens.—Go to the Louvre. Madame tells me the history of this speech. *Monsieur*, yesterday, upon hearing of the slander, applied to the Duc de Livi, who, not knowing what advice to give him, applied to the Bishop d'Autun, who made the speech for him. This morning, *Monsieur* applied to the King, and asked him if he meant to send another of his brothers out of the kingdom, and then went on to complain of the slander. This touches Lafayette, who has too many of these little matters on the anvil. It was then determined that *Monsieur* should go to the Ville.

'*December 27th.*—After dinner I speak to Lafayette about *Monsieur's* speech to the Commons. He takes Short and me into his closet. Tells us, that for a long time he has had information of a plot, that he has followed the track, and at length taken M. de Favras, that on M. de Favras was found a letter from *Monsieur*, which seemed to show that he was but too deeply concerned in it, that he had immediately waited upon him with that letter, which he delivered, telling *Monsieur*, that it was known only to him and Monsieur Bailli; consequently, that he was not compromised, that *Monsieur* was much rejoiced at this intelligence, that yesterday morning, however, he sent for him, and, being surrounded by his courtiers, spoke in high terms respecting a note, which had been circulated the evening before, charging him with being at the head of the conspiracy. Lafayette told him, that he knew of but one way to discover the authors, which was by offering a reward, which should be done. That *Monsieur* then declared his determination to go to the town-house in the afternoon, and that, in consequence, due preparation was made to receive him when he should come, that he came and pronounced the speech we have seen, which was written by Mirabeau, whom he considers as an abandoned rascal.

'Every man is dear to himself. All the world knew Mirabeau to be a rascal, when Lafayette connected himself with him; but it is in this moment only, that he feels the misery of such a connexion. I remind him of the warnings I had given, with respect to Mirabeau, and add the intelligence, which the Count de Luxembourg desired me to convey, viz. that Mirabeau had sworn, that he would ruin Lafayette. I then tell him, that this step of *Monsieur* has thrown the cards into his hands. That he has placed himself at the head of the revolution, in which place he ought to be kept; because, if there should happen any counter revolution, he secures the heads of all others against accidents; and, if the revolution is fully effected, the nullity of his character will of course seclude him from all weight and authority.

'*January* 1*st*, 1790.—I go to Monsieur de Lafayette's a long time before the company assemble. Dine at half past four. He tells me that *Monsieur* and Mirabeau are closely allied; that one is a weak and indolent creature, the other an active and artful rascal. I tell him that they must finish the trial of Bezenvald, because the people begin to take his part, and that, of course, a violent torrent may be turned against his prosecutors. This affects him. To my surprise he tells me that, notwithstanding my criticisms on the *Assemblée*, I must acknowledge that their Constitution is better than that of England. I assure him that he is much mistaken, if he imagines that to be my opinion.

'*January* 12*th*.—There has been a riot this day in Paris, and a number of the *militaire*, who were engaged in the squabble, have been taken prisoners. The matter is not as yet thouroughly understood. But all agree, that Lafayette has acted with great prudence and decision.

'*January* 19*th*.—Dine at the Palais Royal. The Dutchess after dinner tells me, that the Duke's treasurer does not pay, as he ought to do, monthly; and that, unless this is done, she will not adhere to the contract. She receives now 450,000 livres per annum, of which 350,000 are appropriated to the house servants, table, &c. near 15,000 louis. Certainly a great economy might be made upon this article.

'*January* 25*th*.—Dine at the Palais Royal. The Vicomte de St Pris, who sits next to me, mentions the idea of the King's going to the *Assemblée*, in order to put himself at the head of the revolution. I blame this step, and tell him, without mincing the matter, that his advisers to that step give him *un conseil ou inepte ou perfide*.'

It was at this time, that Mr Morris addressed a note to the Queen of France, containing advice as to the course, which the King ought to pursue. He opposed the idea, that the King should place himself at the head of the revolution, alleging that he had already gathered fruits but too bitter from his intercourse with the Assembly, and all that he had now to do

was to remain quiet, and let things take their course. Disasters were thickening, confusion would follow, and ere long the people would be disgusted with the novelties, that were working so much to their injury, and they would then return to their King, 'and offer him the spoils, which they had wrested from him, and it would depend on him alone to ensure the happiness of France.' A Constitution, securing the liberties of the nation, suited to its condition, and acceptable to a wise and benevolent King, might then be framed. At present nothing should be done. This paper was handed to the Queen by her Physician, Vic d'Azyr.

'*February 4th.*—The King has been to the *Assemblée*. His speech has been received with great applause. The Assembly take an oath to support the Constitution, which is to be made. A strange oath! If this step of his Majesty has any effect upon reasonable minds, it must be to prove more clearly the feebleness of his Ministers.'

CHAPTER XIX.

MR MORRIS IS COMMISSIONED BY WASHINGTON ON A SECRET AGENCY TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.—HIS NEGOTIATION.—DUKE OF LEEDS.—MR PITT.—TOUR UP THE RHINE.—SELECTIONS FROM THE DIARY NARRATING EVENTS IN PARIS.—MR MORRIS'S MULTIPLICITY OF AFFAIRS IN EUROPE.—DEATH OF MIRABEAU.—MR MORRIS VISITS THE DUTCHESS OF ORLEANS AT EU.—HE WRITES A MEMOIRE FOR THE KING, AND THE DRAFT OF A SPEECH DESIGNED TO BE PRONOUNCED BY THE KING TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

On the twenty-first of January, Mr Morris received a letter from General Washington, appointing him a private agent to transact important affairs with the British Ministry, and enclosing credentials for that purpose. From the time Mr Adams left England, there had been no American Minister at that Court, and points of deep interest to the United States now

existed, on which it was desirable for the American government to ascertain the views of the cabinet of London.

Mr Morris was detained in Paris till the fifteenth of February, when he set off for England. Business calling him to Holland, he took Brussels, Antwerp, and Amsterdam in his route, and at length crossed the channel from Helvœtsluys to Harwich.

About five weeks from the time he left Paris, we find him at his hotel in London, prepared to enter upon the commission, with which he had been entrusted by the President of the United States. The day after his arrival, he wrote a note to the Duke of Leeds, one of the Ministry, requesting an interview, which was granted for the next day.

Up to this period, some of the articles of the treaty of peace between Great Britain and United States had not been executed by the former, and this had caused complaints and uneasiness with the latter. In regard to two of these articles, Mr Morris was charged to ascertain the intentions of the British government. The first related to the compensation for negroes, taken from the Southern States during the war; and the second, to the fortified posts on the frontiers, situate within the limits of the United States. Hitherto the British had declined paying for the negroes, and the posts they still held in contravention of the treaty. Another topic of inquiry was, whether the British cabinet were disposed to enter into a treaty of commerce with the United States. And a fourth, whether they intended to send a Minister to America.

At the first interview, when the Duke of Leeds read Mr Morris's letter of credence, he expressed a marked satisfaction with its contents, and said, 'I am very happy to see this letter, and under the President's own hand; I assure you, it is very much my wish to cultivate a friendly and commercial intercourse between the two countries.' But as the conversation proceeded, it was manifest that his Grace of Leeds was prepared to go no further, than to reiterate general assurances of good will, and the disposition of his Majestiy's government to

maintain a friendly intercourse. It was his idea, that the articles ought to be performed in the order in which they stood in the treaty ; and, as the United States had not yet complied with the article, stipulating the payment of debts due before the war to British subjects, they could not rightfully demand compensation for the negroes, till that article should be performed. This argument had a sound basis, though the idea, that the articles of a treaty are to be executed in the order of their arrangement, is illusory, and would prevent the performance of any treaty, if each party should choose to hold out till the other takes the lead. It was nevertheless true, that the British debts had not been paid, and the reason was, that the national government wanted power to compel the payment, but since the adoption of the Constitution they were invested with the power, and this reason had ceased to exist. The Supreme Court held jurisdiction over cases of this sort, and the British creditors had only to bring their suits before that tribunal. It was further urged, in extenuation of past delinquency, that the Southern States, which had been the most blamed on this score, had been deprived of the labor of their negroes, and of the stipulated compensation, which would have furnished a resource for the payment of these same debts.

In regard to the posts, the Minister said nothing. When the topic was pressed, he turned the conversation. Mr Morris then gently hinted, that it was a circumstance, which had not made an agreeable impression in the United States, that his Majesty had forborne to send them a Minister, while they had one residing for two or three years in London. The Duke of Leeds rejoined, that it was his wish to send one, that the thing had often been thought of, but it was difficult to find a person of adequate abilities, who would be acceptable to the people of the United States; and, besides, America was a great way off, and many did not like to go so far. It may be imagined, that Mr Morris did not think it worth while to discuss these reasons. He suggested to his Grace, that he might possibly wish to consider the matter a little, and read over

the treaty and the American Constitution, before they proceeded further. He then gave him General Washington's letter, that he might have it copied, and took his leave. The business of a commercial treaty did not come up at this interview.

Three weeks had passed away, when he received a letter from the Duke of Leeds, in which he lamented, that the United States had failed to comply with the engagements in the treaty, by which they were in the most solemn manner bound, and added, 'should the delay in fulfilling them have rendered their final completion impracticable, we have no scruple in declaring our object is to retard the fulfilling such subsequent parts of the treaty, as depend entirely upon Great Britain, until redress is granted to our subjects upon the specific points of the treaty itself, on a fair and just compensation obtained for the non-performance of those engagements on the part of the United States.' As to a commercial treaty, the Minister wrote so vaguely, that no definite impressions could be derived from his language, and hence it was reasonable to infer, that the British government really did not wish to enter into such a treaty.

To this note Mr Morris replied, by requesting an explanation, or rather an explicit statement, of the particulars in the treaty, to the fulfilment of which the United States had been bound, and which had been rendered impracticable; and, moreover, the nature and extent of the redress expected for the subjects of his Britannic Majesty, and the measure of compensation required, as preliminary to a perfect execution of the treaty on the part of Great Britain. Till these things were brought into a definite, tangible form, they could neither be understood nor discussed, obstacles could not be removed, nor remedies provided.

Nothing further passed till the nineteenth of May, when Mr Morris had occasion to call the attention of the Minister to another subject. The affair at Nootka Sound, in which two British vessels had been captured by the Spaniards, was looked upon as an insult by the government, and the press-gangs

were set in motion to recruit sailors for the navy, with the avowed design of retaliating for this outrage. In consequence of this step, several American seamen were impressed, and applications made by the captains for their relief. As there was no Minister, consul, or other public agent in London, from the United States, there was no mode of bringing these applications in form before the government. In this state of things Mr Morris thought it his duty to interfere, and upon his request the Duke of Leeds consented to hold a conversation on the subject. The great difficulty, which then existed, and which always will exist, of distinguishing between English and American seamen, was stated and examined, and Mr Morris suggested the idea, that certificates of citizenship, granted by admiralty courts in America, should be admitted as a protection to American seamen.

The interview was continued the next day in presence of Mr Pitt, the Prime Minister, who took the lead of the conversation. He was pleased with Mr Morris's plan of the protecting certificates, but thought, in spite of every caution in the admiralty offices, that it was subject to abuse. No doubt; yet it was for the interest of the British government to wink at such abuse, rather than risk the consequences of the practice now begun, which would sow the seeds of national animosity, and produce innumerable evils. The plan of certificates was then discussed, and a mode of carrying it into effect was dwelt upon in detail by Mr Morris.

From this topic the discourse diverged to others, upon which, as before, Mr Pitt was the chief spokesman. The Ministers both declared, however, that the Duke's letter had been misunderstood, respecting a treaty of commerce, intimating that such a treaty was desired. They next advanced to the business of compensation and the posts, in which Mr Pitt took the same ground, of course, as had already been held by the Duke of Leeds, and adhered to it in terms as general and vague. He seemed, also, to have an idea of making a new treaty, in which matters should be arranged and difficulties

settled; but Mr Morris saw no occasion for this, and thought it would be better to perform the old one.

In regard to sending a Minister to the United States, Mr Pitt inquired if one would be sent in return. Mr Morris was not authorized to say so, but there could hardly be a doubt. A Minister had already been sent to England, on the proposal of the British government to exchange Ministers, but they had sent none on their part, and now it was necessary for them to make the first advances. This was due to the dignity of the United States, and it was very easy to arrange the form of communication. Let a Minister be appointed, and his departure delayed, till it should be ascertained that another was appointed in the United States. 'I assured him,' says Mr Morris in writing to General Washington, 'that the rulers of America have too much understanding to care for etiquette, but prayed him at the same time to remember, that they (the British) had hitherto kept us at a distance, instead of making advances; that you had gone quite as far as they had any reason to expect, in writing the letter just mentioned, but that from what had passed in consequence of it, and which, as he might naturally suppose, I had transmitted, we could not but consider them as wishing to avoid an intercourse.' Mr Pitt observed that this was a wrong impression, which he ought to remove, and that they were disposed to cultivate friendly connexions. Mr Morris replied, that, if such was their sentiment, it should be given in writing, that there might be no mistake.

'I observed further,' says Mr Morris, 'that our disposition towards a good understanding was evidenced, not only by your letter, but also by the decision of a majority of the House of Representatives, against laying extraordinary restrictions on British vessels in our ports. Mr Pitt said, that instead of restrictions, we ought to give them particular privileges, in return for those which we enjoy here. I assured him that I knew of none, except that of being impressed, a privilege which of all others we least wished to partake of. The Duke of Leeds observed, in the same style of jocularity, that we were at least

treated in that respect as the most favored nation, seeing that we were treated like themselves. But Mr Pitt said seriously, that they had certainly evinced good will towards us, by what they had done respecting our commerce. I replied, therefore, with like seriousness, that their regulations had been dictated by a view to their own interest; and, therefore, as we felt no favor, we owned no obligation.'

Here the interview terminated, with the promise of the Ministers to consult together, and let him know the result of their deliberations. From these hints it may be gathered, that the conversation was animated and warm, but the views of the British government, on all the main topics of discussion, were left enveloped in as dark a cloud of uncertainty, as they were when General Washington wrote his letter. The inference of Mr Morris was therefore just, that they were not disposed to second any advances towards new arrangements. He waited till the tenth of September, when another letter from the Duke of Leeds convinced him, that his impressions were correct, and that it would be in vain to pursue the objects of his mission further. He had another interview, and much talk with his Grace, but not more satisfactory, as to the main points at issue.

It was Mr Morris's opinion, that the British government were willing, that their relations with America should remain unchanged, till they should see what course the affairs of Europe would take, and this conjecture was borne out by succeeding events. The prospect of war or peace might make an essential difference with them, as to the terms on which their interest would dictate permanent arrangements with the United States. Delay could do no harm, and, in the present crisis, there was a fair ground for anticipating, that it might be turned to an advantage. The same argument, though in the opposite direction, was just as strong on the side of the United States. If England were entangled in a European war, she would be more likely to yield to the just demands and seek the good offices of her American friends; and if she remained

at peace, she could never have more encouragement, from the aspect of her fortunes, than at present, for assuming an air of reserve and indifference. If delay was policy on one side, therefore, it was equally so on the other, as far as distant objects and general interests were concerned, but the internal condition of the United States, at the outset of the new government, made it important to them, that the articles of the treaty of peace should be speedily performed by Great Britain.

When Mr Morris first arrived in London, he made known the objects of his mission to the French Minister, enjoining secrecy. His motive was, as he declares in his Diary, that the American government might always have it in their power to say to the French Court, that they had taken no steps, in regard to the treaty of peace, without the knowledge of their ally. This was surely an honorable motive, but the result proved, that prudence is sometimes a safer virtue than honor. The secret was poorly kept by his friend, M. de la Luzerne, who, in the true spirit of a diplomatist, made a handle of it to the British Ministry, and contrived to fix the impression, that the first movement came from his Court. The thing went out from this source, and, getting to the ears of Washington and the American cabinet, operated to Mr Morris's disadvantage in that quarter. It was pretended, that the disclosure of M. de la Luzerne was the reason, why the British Ministry showed so much reserve in their negotiation with the American agent, not being flattered with the idea of French influence mingling in this manner with the American councils. Mr Morris was also charged, by his political opponents at home, with seeking the society of the opposition in England, and thus associating himself with men, who were odious to the Ministers, and losing his weight with them on that account.

When these reports and charges came to his knowledge, he doubted the former and denied the latter. M. de la Luzerne was then dead, but Mr Morris did not believe he had disclosed

the secret, because, to say nothing of honor, he had a direct interest in keeping it to himself, for he was afraid the American government would call on France to support their claims, which, in the deranged state of French affairs at that time, would have been an awkward and disagreeable circumstance. He was well advised of the British views concerning the treaty, and, therefore, it was his best policy to appear unacquainted with the demand of the United States. This is plausible enough, but still, the temptation of divulging a secret, which gave consequence to the Minister and his government, was greater, perhaps, than M. de la Luzerne's diplomatic ambition found strength to resist, even at the hazard of a little policy. If the tale was not told by him, how did it get abroad? It evidently leaked out through the medium of the British cabinet, and it could only find its way there, by the obliging communicativeness of the French Ambassador. But, after all, there is no cause for believing, that Mr Pitt and the Duke of Leeds were influenced, in the negotiation, by any views of the subject connected with this fact. They acted from other and deeper motives. As to the story of his frequenting the opposition, it was the forgery of malice or ignorance. Mr Morris affirms, that, purposely to avoid suspicion on this ground, he took special pains to walk in another track, and that Fox, the Coryphæus of the party, he never met but twice during the period of his agency.

In returning to France, Mr Morris made a rapid excursion through the Netherlands and Germany, by the way of Dunkirk, Ghent, Antwerp, Aix la Chapelle, Cologne, Coblentz, Francfort, Darmstadt, Manheim, and Strasburg. It seems to have been a journey merely for exercise and observation, for he stopped but a short time only at the principal towns. His Diary presents little else, than the daily incidents common to every traveller, remarks on the inns, roads, vehicles of conveyance, the slowness of their movements, obstinacy of postillions, and the like, events and circumstances more interesting to him at the moment, than the detail of them would be to the reader.

There is a great deal about the face of the country, soil, and agriculture, to which, in passing through different countries, his attention was always much attracted, as indicating the condition of the inhabitants, and national resources. In the towns he likewise visited the objects usually pointed out to travellers, as things to be seen, and he talks now and then, but not often, of antiquities, architecture, and paintings.

He proceeded up the Rhine to Francfort, and thence by the usual route through Strasburg to Paris. Here things presented themselves much as he had left them six months before, the revolutionary excitement still increasing, and the same portentous uncertainty hanging over the future. He went to the club, one of his former haunts, where he 'found the *sentiment aristocratique* prevailing not a little,' and, from sundry circumstances, it may be inferred, that his own aristocratic tendencies, in regard to France, had not suffered diminution during his absence. His friend de Moustier was busy in making a Constitution, 'and as usual on the high ropes of royal prerogative.' De Moustier had the happiness to 'stand better at Court, than he had himself ever expected.' According to him, 'the King and Queen were determined never to abuse their authority, if they should recover it.' The Queen had been particularly gracious, and de Moustier 'expected to be consulted on affairs by and bye.' Mr Morris called on Lafayette, who 'affected to be very well pleased to see him,' and asked him to dine the next day. This accordingly took place, but Lafayette was so much occupied, that he came late to dinner and retired soon, which left no time for a conversation, which Mr Morris wished to hold with him upon a special topic. For this cause, or some other, he went away a little out of humor.

'*November* 19*th.*—Go to the Palais Royal. We meet here the Duc de Laval. After dinner, I have some conversation with him and the Count de Thiare, from whence I apprehend that a serious plan is laid for introducing troops of the Emperor, in order to liberate the King and Queen, and restore the former government. After dinner go to the *Comédie Fran-*

çais, and sit with the Dutchess, to hear Brutus. Thence to Madame de Ségur's, where I take up Madame de Chastellux. In the way home, she tells me that she is persuaded there will be an effort made by the Emperor in favor of his sister. I hinted to the Count de Thiare the advantages, that would result from putting the Dauphin into the hands of governors, and sending him upon his travels.

'*November 25th.*—After dinner I go to Lafayette's. Madame receives me coolly enough. I stay some time leaning on the chimney piece. He comes out, and, as soon as he sees me, approaches. Asks why I do not come and see him. I answer, that I do not like to mix with the crowd, which I find here. That whenever I can be useful, I am at his orders. He desires me to call tomorrow at three.

'*November 26th.*—Go to Lafayette's. Converse about half an hour. He asks my opinion of his situation. I give it *sans ménagement*. I tell him that the time approaches, when all good men must cling to the Throne. That the present King is very valuable, on account of his moderation; and if he should possess too great authority, might be persuaded to grant a proper Constitution. That the thing called a Constitution, which the *Assemblée* have framed, is good for nothing. That, as to himself, his personal situation is very delicate. That he nominally, but not really, commands his troops. That I really cannot tell how he is to establish discipline among them; but, unless he can accomplish that object, he must be ruined, sooner or later. That the best line of conduct, perhaps, would be to seize an occasion of disobedience and resign, by which means he could preserve a reputation in France, which would be precious, and hereafter useful. He says, that he is only raised by circumstances and events, so that when they cease he sinks, and, the difficulty now is, how to excite them. I observe, that events will arise fast enough of themselves, if he can but make a good use of them, which I doubt, because I do not place any confidence in his troops.

'He asks, what I think of a plan in agitation, with respect

to the protesting Bishops, viz. to withhold their revenues. I tell him, that the Assembly must turn them out of doors naked, if they wish the people to clothe them. He says he is a little afraid of that consequence. I reiterate to him the necessity of restoring the nobility, at which, of course, he flinches, and says that he should like two Chambers as in America. I tell him, that an American Constitution will not do for this country, and that two such Chambers would not answer, where there is a hereditary Executive. That every country must have a constitution suited to its circumstances, and the state of France requires a higher toned government, than that of England.'

After this interview, there is an occasional hint in Mr Morris's Diary, that Lafayette was cold to him, and perhaps he was not much surprised, that it should be so. Conversations, like the above, were but ill suited to create the warmth, or cement the bonds of friendship. In truth, their political creeds were constructed on principles so opposite and discordant, that it was not possible for them to harmonize in opinion or action, respecting subjects of that nature. It will be seen as we advance, however, that whatever temporary coldness may have existed, on account of these political differences, the sense of personal regard and respect remained as strong as ever, and that proofs of a true friendship were not wanting, when opportunity called for their exhibition and use.

It would seem, that the Bishop d'Autun had a project to get himself appointed Ambassador to the Austrian Court. The following is Mr Morris's advice in that matter.

'*December 6th.*—The Bishop d'Autun comes in. I speak to him again on the subject of an embassy to Vienna, and mark out the means of succeeding. I tell him that, at present, it is equally dangerous to be in or out of the Assembly. That a foreign employ is the only means of preserving himself *en évidence*, and that, if he can make himself the confidential man between the Queen and her brother, he will be in the straight road to greatness, whenever circumstances will render it desirable.'

Mr Morris had hardly been a month in Paris, when he returned again to London. His commercial and money transactions had been multiplying, from the time of his first arrival in Europe, and they were now grown so extensive and complicated, as to absorb his time and thoughts. 'Never in my life,' said he, 'have I had so many different things agitating my mind, as at present, and I cannot commence one affair, because another is constantly obtruding.' This will not be doubted, if we recur to a few of the objects, to which he has been devoted since leaving America.

In the first place, he had in charge a troublesome business, entrusted to him by Robert Morris, respecting a contract for supplying tobacco on a large scale. This has already been mentioned. Next, he had agreed with M. Necker to furnish twenty thousand barrels of flour by a given time, for the subsistence of Paris. The order reached America in the middle of winter, when the article was scarce, dear, and difficult to be collected in so large a quantity. The consequences were delay, disappointment, and loss. For some time, he was concerned with banking houses in Holland and France, in negotiating for the purchase of a portion of the American debt, which M. Necker, wishing to recruit his stock of ready cash, proposed to sell. But the thing proved abortive. Robert Morris had two ships, which he destined for a cotton voyage to Surat and Bombay, and which were to be fitted out in Europe, under the direction of Gouverneur Morris. They were to take out wines and specie, and to bring home cotton to the European market. Two or three good voyages of this kind had recently been made. But the enterprise did not promise well now, and was thought in the end to be unworthy of pursuit. In London he was concerned in shipping operations with two or three houses, and was some way engaged in consigning tea to merchants in Flanders. He also fitted out an India voyage in London, on account of his mercantile connexions in America. But a very important part of his business was to find purchasers of wild lands, belonging to Robert Morris, him-

self, and others, lying mostly in the State of New York. He was a long time negotiating with the Penn family, in regard to their estates and other property in Pennsylvania, proposing to buy the whole; and the same, also, of the Fairfax estate in Virginia.

The purchase of the American debt to Spain was another project, recommended by his correspondents in the United States. While Mr Jay was Minister in Spain, the Court of that nation, after many deceptive promises, squeezed out the pitiful sum of one hundred and seventy-four thousand dollars, as a loan to the Americans, in assisting them to carry on a war against her enemies and theirs. Nothing had since been done about this debt. The Spanish government, little pleased probably with the recollection of the circumstances attending its origin, had never mentioned it, and the Americans had not yet been in a condition to search after debts, which their creditors permitted to rest. This debt it was supposed might be purchased on such terms, as to be a good speculation, since the government under the new constitution would undoubtedly make timely arrangements for paying all foreign debts.

When Dr Franklin first went to France, he and Silas Deane made an extensive contract with the Farmers General to supply them with tobacco, on the part of the American government, for which the money was advanced to the full amount of the contract. But a portion of the tobacco only was supplied, and a claim still existed against the United States for the surplus. This claim Mr Morris was commissioned to purchase, or rather to make an arrangement for furnishing the tobacco, according to the original terms of the contract, and assuming the demand against the United States. This, again, was a matter of speculation. He was engaged in seeking a private loan for a Company, and another for Robert Morris, and in superintending the general concerns of the latter in Europe. In performing all the above operations, he kept up a constant and labored correspondence in the English and French languages, with bankers and merchants in Philadelphia, New York, London, Paris, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Hamburg.

And this he did, for the most part, without any assistant or clerk, his letters and accounts, according to his usual custom, being written and copied out by his own hand.

Although his residence was in Paris, yet his business called him often to London. In the course of the year 1791, he made this journey three or four times. On the 19th of January, he arrived in Paris, after a month's absence in England.

'*January 19th*, 1791.—Visit Madame de Chastellux, and go with her to dine at the Dutches of Orleans'. Her Royal Highness is ruined, that is, she is reduced from 450,000 to 200,000 livres per annum. She tells me, that she cannot give any good dinners; but, if I will come and fast with her, she will be glad to see me.

'*January 25th*.—At three o'clock go to dine with Madame de Staël, who is not yet come in. The Abbé Sieyès is here, and descants with much self sufficiency on government, despising all that has been said or sung on that subject before him; and Madame says, that his writings and opinions will form in politics a new era, as those of Newton in physics.

'*January 29th*.—At noon take up Madame de Chastellux, and we go together to Choisy, and dine with Marmontel. He thinks soundly. After dinner he mentions his mode of contesting the newfangled doctrine of the *Droits d'homme*, by asking a definition of the word *droit*. And, from that definition, he draws a conclusion against the asserted equality of rights. He admits, however, that all are equal before the law and under the law. I deny this position, and make him remark, that where there is great inequality of rank and fortune, this supposed equality of legal dispensation would destroy all proportion, consequently all justice. If the punishment be a fine, it oppresses the poor, but does not affect the rich. If it be a corporal punishment, it degrades the Prince, but does not wound the beggar. I draw only one conclusion, that in morals every general position requires numerous exceptions, wherefore logical conclusions from such positions must frequently be erroneous. I might have pursued, as I have some

times done, my remarks a little farther to the legal compensation for injuries, where the varieties are greater, because the party committing, and the party suffering wrong, may each be of different rank in society. I might go farther, and notice those varieties of sentiment, which the manners of different nations introduce into social life; for it is a fact, that "the ill we feel is most in apprehension." The legislator, therefore, who would pare down the feelings of mankind to the metaphysical standard of his own reason, would show little knowledge, though he might display much genius.

'*February 24th.*—At noon walk till I am pretty well tired, and then go to the Louvre to dine. Madame is in bed ill. When she got home last night, she found in a blank envelope a will of her Bishop (d'Autun,) making her his heiress. In consequence of some things he had dropped in conversation, she concluded that he was determined to destroy himself, and therefore spent a night in great agitation, and in tears. M. de St Foi, whom she roused at four o'clock in the morning, could not find the Bishop, he having slept near the church in which he was this day to consecrate two Bishops lately elected. At length it turns out, that, pursuant to repeated menaces, he feared the clergy would cause him to be this day destroyed, and had ordered the letter not to be delivered till the evening, meaning to take it back again, if he lived through the day.

'*March 3d.*—M. Barmont and Monsieur de Bergasse came in.* We have much conversation on public affairs, which forms the object of their visit. They tell me, that the Queen is now intriguing with Mirabeau, the Count de Lamarck, and the Count de Mercy, (Austrian Ambassador in Paris,) who enjoy her confidence. They wish to visit me again. They tell me that Mirabeau, whose ambition renders him the mortal enemy of Lafayette, must succeed in ruining him by the in-

* M. Bergasse was the only one of the Deputies, who refused to take the oath of fidelity to the Constitution, on the fourth of February, 1790.

strumentality of his compeers in the Department. I incline to think, however, that Lafayette will hold a good tug, being as cunning as anybody. Mirabeau has much greater talents, and his opponent a better character.

'*April 1st.*—Mirabeau died this day. I tell the Bishop d'Autun, that he should step into the vacancy he has made, and, to that effect, should pronounce his funeral oration, in which he should make a summary of his life, and dwell particularly on the last weeks in which he labored to establish order. Then dwell on the necessity of order, and introduce properly the King. He says, that his thoughts have run much upon that subject this day. I tell him, that he has not a moment to lose, and that such occasions rarely present themselves. I spoke to the Count de Montmorin about a successor to Mirabeau this day, but he tells me, that he cannot easily see who shall be put in his place. He owns that Mirabeau was determined to ruin Lafayette, and says, that he had held him back for some time. He thinks that there is no chance now left but to convoke the next Assembly, as soon as may be, excluding the members of the present. And that the meeting should be far from Paris.

'*April 4th.*—The funeral of Mirabeau, attended, it is said, by more than 100,000 persons in solemn silence, has been an imposing spectacle. It is a vast tribute paid to superior talents, but no great incitement to virtuous deeds. Vices, both degrading and detestable, marked this extraordinary being. Completely prostitute, he sacrificed everything to the whim of the moment, *Cupidus alieni, prodigus sui.* Venal, shameless, and yet greatly virtuous, when pushed by a prevailing impulse, but never truly virtuous, because never under the steady control of reason, nor the firm authority of principle. I have seen this man, in the short space of two years, hissed, honored, hated, mourned. Enthusiasm has just now presented him gigantic. Time and reflection will shrink that stature. The busy idleness of the hour will find some other object to execrate or to exalt. Such is man, and particularly the Frenchman.

'*April* 13*th*.—Go to Madame de Staël's. Converse there with the Dutchess de la Rochefoucauld. Madame de Staël reads her tragedy of Montmorenci. She writes much better than she reads. Her character of the Cardinal de Richelieu is drawn with much ability. The society is small, and we have no small reprehension of the *Assemblée Nationale*, who, it must be confessed, act weakly enough.

'*April* 30*th*.—M. Monciel and M. Bremond come in, and the former gives me an account of what he has done with the chiefs of the Jacobins. He is to have a further conference. They think it will be best to act in concert with the Court, without appearing to do so, lest thereby they should lose their popularity. I agree in the propriety of this, and urge, conformably to what I suppose their views to be, a repeal of the *Décret de quatre ans*, and the *Décret de reeligibilité*. He is to propose this to them, and to obtain, if he can, a list of the articles they desire. Also, if possible, of the places they aspire to.

'*May* 1*st*.—After dinner, I have a long conversation with Monsieur de Montmorin, in the course of which I show him a note I have made on their situation. He begs me to let him have it, and I give it, but with the injunction, that none but their Majesties shall know from whom it comes. I inform him of what has been done with the chiefs of the Jacobins. He tells me how the Ministers stand in that respect. He assures me, that they can do nothing with the King but through him. He mentions a wish to have commissaries appointed by the crown, to keep the peace in the different departments. I reply, that all officers concerned in keeping the peace should be appointed by the crown, but that it is too early to propose anything of the sort. Experience must first demonstrate the necessity. He tells me that he has indisputable evidence of the intrigues of Britain and Prussia. That they give money to the Prince of Condé and to the Duke of Orleans.

'*May* 16*th*.—I learn that the West Indians have retired from the Assembly, and that a decree has been passed to pre-

vent the re-eligibility of the present delegates. I am well pleased with both of these events; for the West Indians have hitherto run into every extreme to obtain popularity, that thereby they might carry their favorite measures, and, being indifferent about France, have contributed much to the mischiefs which have been occasioned.

'*May 20th.*—Montmorin tells me, that he considers the Assembly as finished, and this gives me a poor opinion of his sagacity. A few days ago he was in trepidation, but now in a kind of security, both unfounded. He fears, however, yet for the person of the King. He says, that different people are urging him to do different things, but that he sees nothing to be done. I tell him to remain quiet, for the Assembly are now doing everything they can for the King, with the intention to do everything against him. I ask him whereabouts he is with the claims of the German Princes. He says, that he thinks the Emperor will become the intermediary; but that he fears the Count d'Artois and Prince of Condé. I treat this lightly, as supposing that they will only act in favor of the Royal authority; but he says that they will form a party for themselves; by which I understand only, that they will oblige the King to drive away all his former advisers.'

On his way again to London, Mr Morris took in his route the town of Eu, situate about fifteen miles from Dieppe, on the coast near the English Channel. The Dutchess of Orleans, her father, and the family, were now residing at this place.

'*May 31st.*—This morning I wait upon the Dutchess of Orleans and breakfast in her chamber with Madam de Chastellux. She sends to her father to announce my arrival and desire of visiting him. The old gentleman returns a very polite answer, and we agree that I shall dine with them. I find that there is much restraint and etiquette here. After breakfast, she reads to me her letters to and from the Duke, (Egalité) and then we walk till near dinner time. She tells me the history of their breach from a long time back, and the

manœuvres used by him and those about him. He is a mighty strange fellow. She tells me, that what the world attributes to fondness in her was merely discretion. She hoped to bring him to a more decent and orderly behavior, but finds, at length, that he is to be governed by fear only. She speaks of her difficulties in bringing her father to act. He is nervous and trembles at everything like exertion.'

The same afternoon Mr Morris proceeded to Dieppe, thence to London, and returned in a few days to Paris.

'*July* 17*th*.—Colonel Tarleton and Lord Selkirk are here, (at the British Ambassador's) and the conversation accidentally falls on American affairs, which is diverting, as they did not know me. Tarleton says, that once on the outposts he obtained a list of General Washington's spies, and that Clinton, after putting them in the provost, in a few days let them all out, from weakness of compassion. I blame this weakness, &c. Go from hence to the Louvre, and in my way meet the municipality, with the *Drapeau rouge* displayed. At the Louvre we get into the carriage of my friend, and, after stopping to take my telescope, go to Chaillot; but the time lost there, in taking up Madame de Courcelles, brings us too late on the heights of Passy to see what passed in the Champs de Mars. On our return, however, we learn, that the militia have at length fired on the mob, and killed a few of them. They scampered away as fast as they could. This morning, however, they massacred two men. And this evening they have, it is said, assassinated two of the militia in the street. This affair will, I think, lay the foundation of tranquillity; although, perhaps, a more serious affair is necessary to restrain this abominable populace. Go to Madame de Ségur's, to pass the evening. Her company are all frightened and stay away, except the Chevalier de Boufflers. Ségur tells us what passed between the Queen and him, and how he has been deceived by her.

'*August* 6*th*.—M. de Montmorin repeats what has passed this morning with the King. The recital of the scene brings

tears both into his eyes and mine. Poor man! He considers himself as gone, and that whatever is now done must be for his son.

'*August* 21*st*.—Visit Bergasse, who corrects what I had written this morning, (in the French language.) He says he will write to the King tomorrow on the state of affairs, and tell him, that having obtained the communication of my plan, in order to correct the language, he sends it to his Majesty, but under the strictest injunction of secrecy.

'*August* 26*th*.—Dine with Madame de Staël, who requests me to show her the *mémoire* I have prepared for the King. I am surprised at this, and insist on knowing how she became acquainted with it. She tells me pretty nearly. I read it for her and the Abbé Louis, through whom she gained her intelligence, and they, as I expected, are very averse to so bold a tone. I am well persuaded that a poor conduct will be adopted. The British Ambassadress came in during our lecture, which interrupted it to me very agreeably. Madame de Staël is getting over the illusions she was under about the Constitution.

'*August* 27*th*.—Go to the manufacture of Angoulême, and afterwards to dine with Monsieur de Montmorin, where I arrive late. After dinner retire into his closet and read to him the plan I have prepared of a discourse for the King. He is startled at it. Says it is too forcible. That the temper of the people will not bear it. We have much discourse on this subject. I leave the thing with him. We are to confer further on it, and he is to show it to the King on Monday. I give him leave, which otherwise he would have taken, to show it to his daughter. I know that she will encourage such a step, having previously mounted her imagination to that point.

'*August* 30*th*.—Give to Monsieur de Montmorin a *mémoire* on the present state of things. He tells me, that Madame de Staël once took him in, as she did me, and that her father told him, that it was a common trick with her to pretend to know, in order to learn. I inform him, that I have caused

her to believe, that I have given up the idea entirely, and desire him to speak of it lightly, and as of a thing, which I had abandoned. He says, that it is now in the King's possession, who found the discourse prepared for him difficult to swallow, because it acknowledges the loss of the crown. But he replied to this, that it was only defective, because he had not the command of 150,000 men.

'*September 1st.*—Go to the British Ambassador's, where I converse a little with the Count de Lamarck, who is or pretends to be of my opinion respecting the Constitution, and the conduct to be pursued by the King in that regard. Madame de Staël is here, and is in violent disputation with the Abbé de Montesquiou, and the Bishop d'Autun is in part the subject, to the great edification of Monsieur de Narbonne, who is just arrived from Italy.

'*September 12th.*—This morning Bremond calls and tells me, that the King objected to a speech prepared for him by Pelling, in consequence of a *mémoire* he had received in English. Mr Short tells me, that on Friday last in Council, M. de Montmorin produced observations written by Pelling, but the King preferred mine, and on this he felicitates me. I lead him off the scent, but he tells me that he is informed of this in such a manner, as admits of no doubt, and also that M. de Montmorin is vexed at that preference.

'*September 16th.*—I ask M. de Montmorin for the different papers I have given him. He tells me that the last is in the King's hands, being intended to regulate his future conduct. On inquiry, I find that he did not deliver it till after his Majesty had accepted the Constitution. This is wrong, but it is too late to do any good by saying so. The first paper, being a discourse intended for the King, he says the King has returned, but as I gave it to him, he wishes to keep it. I ask him what became of Pelling's work. He says that it was only a *mémoire*. I tell him what Short told me. He says it is a fabricated story; but from what he afterwards says, I find that Short's and Bremond's are different editions of the same

thing, and I am pretty well persuaded, that the poor King has been prevented by an intrigue from acting as he ought.'

The papers alluded to above were, first, the draft of a speech intended to be pronounced by the King to the Assembly, on his taking the oath to observe the Constitution; and, secondly, a memoir respecting the general state of France at that time, and the course which it was expedient for the King to pursue. The latter was submitted to the King in the English language. He returned the original, and desired Mr Morris to furnish him with a translation, which he might retain for his own use.* The former was also read by the King, but it was not used for the purpose designed. Mr Morris was dissatisfied with the conduct of his friend Montmorin, on account of the part taken by him in this affair. The report of M. Bremond and Mr Short, from whatever source it originated, shows that the King was pleased with Mr Morris's draft, and was inclined to adopt it in part, at least. This impression could hardly get abroad without some foundation. How far the Council influenced his decision, or in what way the personal agency of M. de Montmorin was exercised, are points now left to conjecture.†

'*October* 1*st*.—Ask M. de Montmorin for my discourse. He promises on his honor to give it me. I desire him to give the King my letter about subsistence. That I care nothing for the event, but it is his duty to lay the matter before his Majesty. I ask him, who made the King's speech, which is

---

* Mr Morris writes; 'M. de Montmorin comes in, and gives me the *Mémoire* I had written for the King. He shows me at the same time a note, in which he desires a translation of it.' Again, 'M. de Montmorin tells me the King is urgent for my translation, which he supposes is in order to communicate it to the Queen.' 'Give him the translation as he goes to the Council, having just mentioned to him, that the strong traits are, I fear, dangerous just now, as his Majesty has accepted in a different manner from what I expected. He tells me that there is no danger. *September* 23*d*.'

† The two papers are printed in the Second Volume of this work, pp. 490, 512.

excellent. He assures me that the groundwork is by the King himself. I desire him to make the King observe the difference of effect between this and those long stories, which they made him tell heretofore. He says that he has already done so.

'*October 2d.*—After dinner visit Madame de Staël, who has a motley company, which she says have partaken of a coalition dinner. There is Beaumetz, the Bishop d'Autun, Alexander Lameth, the Prince de Broglio, &c. &c. Malouet comes in, and also the Count de Lamarck, who converses with Madame, I observe, *en particulier*. As to the others, who dined with her, their coalition is natural enough. Ségur is here, who tells me that he has asked for the *Ambassade de Londres*, and is told that it will meet with no difficulty, but must be left to the successor of Monsieur de Montmorin.

'*October 19th.*—This morning the Count de Moustier breakfasts with me. He tells me what passed yesterday evening with the King and Queen, and says that I stand high in their opinion, as well as in that of Monsieur Montmorin. He says the King has offered him the Embassy to England, and that he is to stay there until a proper opportunity shall offer of placing him in the Ministry, which would at present be dangerous. He wishes me to persuade Montmorin to stay longer, which I promise to attempt. He says that he will urge the sending to America for a supply of provisions, or rather of flour, according to my proposal to Monsieur de Montmorin. He has some scheme of finance in his head, which I must discover, if I can.

'*October 21st.*—The Count de Moustier calls and tells me, that he has asked an audience of the Queen on the subject of flour. Her Majesty told him, that she has never yet seen my letter to Monsieur de Montmorin, and she thinks it is of a nature not to have escaped her attention. He desires me to give him a copy. He then tells me, that the King of Prussia will furnish money to assist in putting the finances of this country to rights. He tells me what passed with his Prussian

Majesty on that subject, and that he intended to head his armies for re-establishing the French monarchy.*

'I dine at Madame de Staël's, and say too much against the Constitution, to which she provoked me.

'*October 22d.*—Before dinner, I go into M. de Montmorin's closet, and there urge him to continue for some time longer in office, then to retire as President of the Council. He will not agree. First, because it is impossible to manage the department well. And, secondly, because he has so pointedly declared his determination to retire, that he cannot retreat. I think this last is the strongest reason.

'He repeated to me this morning, what he had once mentioned before, viz. that he considers it as indispensably necessary, that the Queen should be present at the discussion of affairs of the cabinet, and that, for this purpose, there should be a privy council, to which Malouet should be admitted. I do not see the use of this; neither can I conceive his reason. If he expects through Malouet to govern that little council, he mistakes his man. At least, I think so. I told Monsieur de Molleville, that it appeared to me most fitting to remove Duportail at present, and place there some brave, honest soldier, without much regard to his abilities, and then, when de Moustier comes forward, to place him, de Molleville, as *Garde des Sceaux*, and Bourgainville as Minister of the Marine. He approves of this, but wishes to stay where he is, until he shall have gained some reputation by putting the affairs of that department in order.

'*November 15th.*—Call and visit Madame de Staël. She is angry with me. I told Monsieur de Molleville, that she had consulted me relative to Narbonne's acceptance, and he has used it as a pretext against his appointment. I tell her

---

* De Moustier had recently returned from an embassy to the King of Prussia, whither he had been sent after his return from America.

that I see nothing in this to make a handle of. That every body knows Monsieur Narbonne has been in contemplation for that office, and therefore it is natural enough to ask the opinion of different people, whether, in case the post is offered, he should accept. I then add, that he had better not think of it. That the object is merely to fill a gap for a few months, and then to drop the person, who may have been appointed. She tells me, that the Ministry is stronger than is imagined.

'*November 26th.*—M. de Montmorin tells me, that he lately communicated the assurances, that one of the provinces, with all the troops in it, might be depended on. He adds, that the real cause why he quitted the Ministry was, that he had not the full confidence of their Majesties. That they were governed sometimes by counsels from Brussels, sometimes from Coblentz. That he urged them to adopt a privy council to decide in all cases, and endeavored to convince them, that unless they fixed a plan of conduct, they would be greatly injured, but in vain.

'M. Bremond comes, and I work with him at a pamphlet on the finances. I dictate and he writes.

'*December 7th.*—This morning employ myself in preparing a form of government for this country. At half past four go to dine with Monsieur de Montmorin. Find him employed in reading the address to the King by the members of the Department of Paris. It is well written in many respects; but the style is rather that of a popular harangue, than of an address to a monarch.

'*December 13th.*—Finish the copy of a plan of government, and of general principles to accompany it.

'*December 14th.*—Inform the Minister of Marine, (M. de Molleville) that I have prepared some Notes on a Constitution to show him. He says he has sounded the King on the subject, who has commanded him to attend to it. He has recommended to his Majesty the most profound secrecy, and

taken occasion to inculcate the necessity, from seeing in a gazette what had passed in Council.*

'*December* 21*st*.—The Bishop d'Autun observes to me, that the Jacobins have not been able to raise a riot about their address. I tell him that, since the frolic at the *Champ de Mars*, there is little danger of riots, because the people are not very fond of them, when they find that death is a game which two can play at. He says that the King is in wondrous high spirits, since his *Vetos* have gone off easily, and that he will apply them every now and then. Poor King!

'*January* 10*th*, 1792.—This morning M. Bremond and M. Monciel call on me and breakfast. After they are gone, I read and write till my carriage is ready, then go to the Minister of the Marine, with whom I have a conference on the Bishop d'Autun's mission,† and on other public affairs. He tells me, that he has communicated to the Queen his sentiments on the very impolitic step now taken, and that she is sensible of this confidence. He says the King spoke of me in very favorable terms the other day, when he communicated to him the plan of a correspondence with Monsieur de Monciel. I tell him, that it is time to arrange matters wth the Emperor, &c. He says (and justly) that, unless he were sure that the King and Queen make no imprudent confidences, he dares not risk himself. The risk is indeed great.

'*January* 11*th*.—M. Monciel informs me, that he has conversed with Monsieur Barthelemi, upon the Bishop d'Autun's errand to London. He informs him, that the object is to make an alliance with England, in order to counterbalance Austria; and the offer to England is the Isle of France and Tobago. This is a most wretched policy. Bremond says, the Jacobin party have got hold of a plan of their enemies to work a violent change in the Constitution, and he brings me

---

* See the '*Notes on the Form of a Constitution for France*,' in the present work, Vol. iii. p. 481.

† As Ambassador to England.

a newspaper which contains it. There is reason to believe, that some such thing was in agitation. It was very absurd.

'M. de Marbois assures me, that he is faithful to the King, and considers that as being the only possible fidelity to the nation. He told me that he hoped the Bishop's embassy would be stopped.

'*January* 14*th*.—The Bishop d'Autun goes off tomorrow. The Assembly have this day, upon a report of the Diplomatic Committee, determined to attack the Emperor, unless he begs pardon by the tenth of February. The Bishop says, that the nation is *une parvenue*, and, of course, insolent. He says their situation is such, that nothing but violent remedies can operate, and then must either kill or cure.

'*January* 16*th*.—M. de Montmorin informs me, that when the Duke of Orleans was in England, he tried hard to obtain an authority to offer a treaty to England, which was of course not granted. He acquaints me with the conversation, which he had on that subject with the Bishop d'Autun, who hopes, as he says, to turn out Pitt, and thinks his success certain, if he could have the aid of the Duke of Biron. This is curious enough.

'*January* 22*d*.—This morning prepare for my departure. Vic d'Azyr (the Queen's physician) comes in, and tells me he has been to my lodgings at the request of her Majesty, to desire, if I learn anything in England interesting to them, that I would communicate it.'

CHAPTER XX.

MR MORRIS APPOINTED MINISTER FROM THE UNITED STATES TO THE COURT OF FRANCE.—PRESENTED TO THE KING.—AIDS IN CONCERTING A SECRET PLAN FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE KING AND ROYAL FAMILY FROM FRANCE.—BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE.—MONCIEL.—THE KING DEPOSITS MONEY IN THE HANDS OF MR MORRIS.—DUTCHESS OF ORLEANS.

Scarcely had Mr Morris departed from Paris, when an article came out in Brissot's paper, affirming that he was sent over to London by the Aristocrats and the Court, for the purpose of thwarting the plans and defeating the negotiations of the Bishop d'Autun. This was copied into the British papers, but was doubtless without any foundation.* He had been but a few days in London, when he received intelligence of his appointment as Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to the Court of France.

The news of this appointment was not altogether unexpected. His friend Robert Morris had written to him eighteen months previously, that there could be little doubt of his being

---

* When the report of the above imputation of Brissot de Warville reached Mr Morris, he wrote to him the following note.

'Mr Morris is informed, that Monsieur de Warville has imputed to him, in terms not very delicate, an intention to counteract the designs of the Bishop d'Autun in England. He takes the liberty to assure M. de Warville, that he is much misinformed. Whether the French Court does or does not wish success to the mission of M. de Perigord, Mr Morris will not pretend to conjecture, till he knows what that mission is; but if the idea of their Majesties' disinclination be no better founded, than that of Mr Morris's agency, he ventures to assure M. de Warville, that it is totally unworthy of credit. *London, February 3d*, 1792.'

intended either for the Court of London or Versailles, and that Mr Jay believed it would be the former. He added, that Mr Jay had conversed with the President on the subject, before Mr Jefferson's arrival as Secretary of State, and considered it as a fixed point in the President's mind, that Gouverneur Morris should be nominated to one of the two Courts. It was supposed, that Mr Jefferson's partiality would induce him to prefer Mr Madison, as Minister to France, and that Washington's well known friendship for that gentleman, and respect for his character and talents, would naturally incline him to accord with the opinion of the Secretary of State. Again, a movement was made in Europe, probably through M. de Montmorin, to promote Mr Carmichael, then Chargé des Affaires in Madrid, to the station of Minister at the Court of Versailles. Montmorin had been on terms of intimacy and friendship with Carmichael, during the time of his residence in Spain as Minister from France. Mr Short, also, who had been left by Mr Jefferson as Chargé in Paris, had some good grounds for expecting the appointment of Minister. Amidst these floating rumors, Mr Morris had slender expectations of being designated for that mission, although he had reasons for anticipating the one to England. It was known, however, to Robert Morris, that his preference was for France, and it may be presumed his friend did not leave the President ignorant of the fact.

Mr Morris, Mr Pinckney, and Mr Short were nominated by the President on the same day to the Senate, the first for the Court of France, the second for England, and the third for Holland. But these nominations were not confirmed, till twenty days afterwards, during which period there was much debate on the question, whether it was for the interest of the United States to have Ministers residing permanently at foreign Courts. The sentiment of the Senators was divided, and the same was understood of the Representatives. In the Senate there would seem to have been a majority against the question, for the appointments were after all confirmed on the ground, that there was then a '*special occasion*' for sending Ministers

to the three respective Courts. These were the first appointments of Foreign Ministers under the new government.

In Mr Morris's case were also other considerations, which his enemies made the most of against him. The ill success of his negotiation in England, and the insinuations that had got abroad of his indiscreet confidence in M. de la Luzerne, and his abrupt manners towards the British Ministry, were magnified by his political adversaries into charges of a grave nature.* His aristocratical connexions in France, and his hostility to the principles of the revolution, as it was then conducted, were also well known, and thought by many to disqualify him for the station of Minister from a Republic, in alliance with that nation, and professing a sympathy in its revolutionary progress. Owing to these combined causes of opposition, he was chosen in the Senate, January 12th, 1792, by a majority of only five votes out of sixteen, there being eleven against him.

When the notice of his appointment was forwarded, under the seal of the Secretary of State, General Washington wrote him a private letter, in which he frankly enumerated all the objections, which had been raised against him, and more than intimated a belief that they were in some instances too well founded. 'The official communications of the Secretary of State,' says the President, 'accompanying this letter, will convey to you the evidence of my nomination, and the appointment of you to

---

* Mr Morris ever considered these reports, as having been sent out by the British Ministers, with the view of apologizing for their own conduct, in not coming to some seasonable arrangement with him, which he believed they afterwards repented of. In writing to Robert Morris, November 14th, 1791, he says; 'The obstacle to a treaty was in the British Cabinets. The opposers have since found out, that they committed a fatal error, and wish to get clear of the blame. They would have been very glad of any excuse to tread the ground back again, but fortunately none such was given, and they have, therefore, *in fear of French influence*, sent you a Minister. And they will make a treaty with us, as soon as the people are ripe for it, and the mercantile interests feel the necessity.'

be Minister Plenipotentiary for the United States at the Court of France; and my assurance, that both were made *with all my heart*, will, I am persuaded, satisfy you as to that fact. I wish I could add, that the *advice and consent* (of the Senate) flowed from a similar source. Candor forbids it, and friendship requires, that I should assign the causes, as far as they have come to my knowledge.' He then recapitulates all the particulars, which have been heretofore mentioned, respecting Mr Morris's sentiments, manners, and transactions in England and France. 'It was urged,' he continues, 'that in France you were considered as a favorer of aristocracy, and unfriendly to its revolution, (I suppose they meant the *Constitution;*) that under this impression you could not be an acceptable public character; and, of consequence, you would not be able, however willing, to promote the interest of this country in an essential degree.' It is remarkable here, that the President regarded Mr Morris's aristocratical tendencies, as appertaining to the Constitution, and not to the principles or progress of the revolution, but this inference would scarcely be drawn from his Diary, or letters, at any stage of his residence in France. To the revolution, as it was conducted, and in the spirit of its advocates and movers, he cannot be said ever to have been friendly.

General Washington closed his letter in the same tone of frankness, which he had begun, seasoned with a spice of admonition, that could not fail to give it effect.

'Not to go further into detail, I will place the ideas of your political adversaries in the light, in which their arguments have presented them to me; viz. that the promptitude, with which your lively and brilliant imagination displays itself, allows too little time for deliberation and correction, and is the primary cause of those sallies, which too often offend, and of that ridicule of character, which begets enmity not easy to be forgotten, but which might easily be avoided, if it were under the control of more caution and prudence. In a word, that it is indispensably necessary, that more circumspection should

be observed by our representatives abroad, than they conceive you are inclined to adopt. In this statement you have the *pros* and *cons*. By reciting them, I give you a proof of my friendship, if I give none of my policy or judgment. I do it on the presumption, that a mind conscious of its own rectitude fears not what is said of it, but will bid defiance to shafts, that are not barbed with accusations against honor or integrity. Of my good opinion, and of my friendship and regard, you may be assured.'

This letter was received by Mr Morris in the same friendly temper in which it had been written, and his subsequent conduct as Minister to the French government affords ample proof, that its counsels were not disregarded. That his opinions, and the bold manner in which he had expressed them on all occasions, were a serious obstacle to the successful exercise of his official duties, especially after the overthrow of the monarchy in France, and the triumph of the disorganizing factions, cannot be denied, but he is entitled to the full credit of caution and circumspection, and to the praise of maintaining with dignity and firmness the interests of his country, in circumstances extremely vexatious and trying. It may with truth be affirmed, that no American Minister abroad ever had a more difficult task to perform, or executed it, considering the situation in which he was placed, with more skill and ability.

His official correspondence, while he was Minister to the French Court, was with Jefferson then Secretary of State, and occasionally with Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury. To Washington he wrote constantly, as to a private friend, and presented a more detailed narrative of affairs, than was contained in his public despatches. It would be difficult to find, within the same compass, so full an account of the political progress and changes of the French Revolution for nearly five years, as may be gathered from his letters, private and official. He viewed the great panorama of passing events with a penetrating and comprehensive mind, and sketched what he saw

in a style of bold and graphic accuracy. Allowance is to be made for the bias of his opinions, and his settled aversion to the principles of the revolutionists, but his judgment seldom deceived him, and his sincerity may always be relied on. His speculations are uttered as speculations, and may be distinguished as such. No one ever need confound them with the deliberate convictions of his understanding, his deductions from argument, or his statement of facts. Frankness, honesty, and a fearlessness in expressing his sentiments, were prominent features of his mind, and appear in all his writings.

When Mr Morris arrived in Paris, on the sixth of May, there was a rumor afloat, that the French Cabinet did not intend to receive him, as Minister from the United States; but if such a design had at any time been entertained, it was abandoned, and never communicated to him from any official source.

'*May* 15*th*.—I go to Mr Short's, from whence we go together to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The interview here is very short. He observes, that I am already acquainted with the King. I reply, that I never saw his Majesty but in public, nor ever exchanged a word with him in my life, although some of their gazettes have made me one of his Ministers, and that I am persuaded he would not know me, if he should see me. Upon this, he says, that, since I have mentioned it, he will acknowledge that such is the general idea. I tell him, that I am naturally frank and open, and therefore do not hesitate to say, that in the time of the Constituent Assembly, I endeavored, being then a private individual, and prompted by my regard for this nation, to effect certain changes in the Constitution, which appeared to me essential to its existence. That I was not successful, and being at present a public man, I consider it as my duty not to meddle with their affairs. I ask him then, when I shall wait upon him to be presented, and he says he will let me know, but he thinks the sooner it is done the better.

'*June* 2*d*.—I am presented to the King, who, on receiving

my letter of credence, says "*C'est de la part des Etats Unis*," and his tone of voice and his embarrassment mark well the feebleness of his disposition. I reply, "*Oui, Sire, et ils m'ont chargé de témoigner à votre Majesté leur attachement pour elle, et pour la nation Française.*" I am afterwards presented to the Queen, who shows me her son and says, "*Il n'est pas encore grand.*" I reply, "*J'espere, Madame, qu'il sera bien grand, et véritablement grand.*" "*Nous y travaillons, Monsieur.*" I then go to mass.'*

---

*The following letter from Hamilton to Morris will serve as a key to some of the published correspondence of the latter, during his residence in France as Minister from the United States.

'Philadelphia, June 22d, 1792.

'My dear Sir,

'I accept your challenge to meet you in the field of mutual *confidential* communication; though I cannot always promise punctuality, or copiousness. I will however do the best I can.

'Will it not be a necessary preliminary to agree upon a cypher? One has been devised for me, which, though simple in execution, is tedious in preparation. I may shortly forward it.

'In the mean time, let us settle some appellations for certain official characters. I will call,

The President, *Scævola.*
The Vice President, *Brutus.*
Secretary of State, *Scipio.*
Secretary at War, *Sempronius.*
Sec'y of the Treasury, *Paulus.*
Attorney General, *Lysander*

SENATORS.
Robert Morris, *Cato.*
Oliver Ellsworth, *Virginius.*
Rufus King, *Leonidas.*
George Cabot, *Portius.*
Aaron Burr, *Sævius.*
Richard Henry Lee, *Marcus.*
Monroe, *Sydney.*
Ralph Izard, *Themistocles.*

REPRESENTATIVES.
James Madison, *Tarquin.*
Ames, *Valerius.*
Abraham Baldwin, *Hampden.*
John Lawrence, *Solon.*
Mercer, *Tacitus.*
Murray, *Livy.*
Thomas Fitsimmons, *Cicero.*
Egbert Benson, *Cromwell.*
Jeremiah Wadsworth, *Titius.*
Jonathan Trumbull, *Quintus.*
Giles, *Chronus*

'You see that I have avoided characteristic names. In my next

'*June 4th.*—Dine at Dumouriez's (Minister of Foreign Affairs.) The society is noisy and in bad style. After dinner, I converse with M. Bonne-Carrère, and give him reasons why they should repeal the decrees respecting our commerce. He says he is fully in opinion with me, but nothing can be done till they have brought the Assembly into greater consistence. I observe that Dumouriez is anxious to converse. Give him the opportunity, and begin by delivering the letter from the President of the United States to the King, on his acceptance of the Constitution. He says, that he cannot attend to the affairs of the United States, until after his return from the frontiers. He says the King of Prussia will not act against France; that he is quite easy on that head; that, if the negotiators in England have made any considerable offers since he came into the Administration, it is without authority. He is against all treaties, other than those of commerce. He thinks there is no danger to the Constitution at present, that it will triumph over every obstacle, and must amend itself. I think he cannot believe one half he says.

'*June 17th.*—M. Monciel calls and tells me, that the Lameth party have pressed him hard to accept the place of Minister of the Interior.* I advise him to take nothing but the office of Foreign Affairs. He quits me with that intention, but

---

you shall have a sketch of the general state of the country, its politics and parties. I thank you for your calculations, as I will for every suggestion you shall make. I shall seldom fail to get either a new idea, or a new application of an old one. I shall endeavor to put in train, by this opportunity, the papers you advise to be sent to the Russian Ambassador. If your courage is not put to the test, by being put to *wear* what you have won, it will not be my fault. Do you know enough of the catechism in the vulgar tongue to fulfil what you have lately undertaken? Yours sincerely,

'ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

* Monciel became Minister of the Interior on the eigteenth of June, but he went out with the rest of the Ministers on the ninth of July, having held the place only twenty days.

says they have offered him the Interior, as a step towards the other office.

'*June 19th.*—Bremond tells me, that Monciel will call on me early tomorrow. He has had a long conversation with the King, and is well pleased with him. There is to be a sort of riot tomorrow about fixing a Maypole before the Château.

'*June 20th.*—There is a great movement in Paris, and the guard is paraded. I dine with the Baron de Blome. After dinner we learn, that the deputation of the *Fauxbourgs* has forced the unresisting guard, filled the Château, and grossly insulted the King and Queen. His Majesty has put on the *Bonnet rouge*, but he persists in refusing to sanction the decrees. The Constitution has this day, I think, given its last groan.

'*June 25th.*—The King has received an offer of assistance from Picardy. Bremont comes and writes under my dictation a plan to be submitted by the King to the Assembly.

'*June 28th*—This morning M. de Monciel calls on me before I am up, and tells me that M. de Lafayette is arrived, and is to go this morning to the Assembly. The King, on receiving the project prepared for him, said it would be very good, if they could count on the *Gardes Nationales*. I tell him, that Lafayette's visit can produce nothing, and therefore he must exert himself to bring forward the Picards. He thinks Lafayette may be rendered instrumental to the sortie of the King from Paris, and he counts on the Swiss. This latter part of the plan is the most reasonable. Dress and go to Court, but find that the *Corps Diplomatique* is postponed till tomorrow.

'*June 29th.*—I go to Court. Madame Elizabeth and the Queen remark to me, that I came yesterday. I tell the latter, that it was the fault of the post, for so Sequeville told me, and the remark seems directed against him and Lalive. Lafayette speaks to me at Court in the tone of ancient familiarity. I tell him that I should be glad to see him for a few minutes. He

says that he is going out of town this evening, but gives me rendezvous at Monsieur de Montmorin's. I observe to him that he must soon return to his army, or go to Orleans; and that he must determine to fight for a good Constitution, or for that wretched piece of paper, which bears the name; that in six weeks it will be too late. He asks what I mean by a good Constitution, whether it is an aristocratic one. I tell him, yes; and that, I presume, he has lived long enough in the present style to see, that a popular government is good for nothing in France. He says that he wishes for the American Constitution, but a hereditary Executive. I reply that, in such case, the monarch will be too strong, and must be checked by a hereditary Senate. He says it goes hard with him to give up that point. Here ends our colloquy.

'*July 2d.*—Monciel and Bremond call on me. The King has neither plans, money, nor means. The Lameth faction are all as naked as he. Monciel says, that he is afraid of falling into the hands of the Constitutionalists. The French, says Monciel, are, I am afraid, too rotten for a free government. I tell him that the experiment may, nevertheless, be tried, and despotism still remains as a last resort.

'*July 7th.*—The different parts of the Assembly are united, and all is love and kindness. This arises from fear among the republicans. The King has been to the Assembly, which I disapprove.

'*July 8th.*—Bremond calls and tells me, that Monciel intends to resign. He opposed in Council what was done yesterday, and spoke privately both to the King and Queen, but without effect. Go to Court. Her Majesty is in good spirits, and very affable. I am not pleased, however, with her conduct.

'*July 9th.*—Spend the evening at Madame d'Albani's. The Venetian Ambassador, who had expressed great hopes and expectations yesterday, from the reconciliation scene, is quite done over to day. Brissot has pronounced a fiery discourse against the King.

'*July* 11*th.*—Bremond comes this morning and tells me, that their Majesties flashed in the pan yesterday morning, which occasioned the resignation of the Ministry. This I suspected. He says they have reproached Monciel, who retorted smartly. On the ground of these reproaches, we prepare heads of a discourse for Monciel, in the view, if their Majesties come round, to strike a still more important stroke. I think there is a want of mettle, which will ever prevent them from being truly royal.

'*July* 12*th.*—Bremond has seen Pellin, who blames Monciel for precipitation, and says that things may yet be arranged. Monciel is to have an interview with the King and Queen this morning. I go to Court. The countenances of their Majesties are a little down.

'*July* 17*th.*—Monsieur and Madame de Montmorin and Madame de Beaumont, Lord Gower and Lady Sutherland, and Mr Huskisson, secretary to Lord Gower, the Venetian Ambassador, and Spanish Chargé d'Affaires, dine with me. In the evening, Monsieur de Montmorin takes me into the garden to communicate the situation of things and ask my opinion. I tell him, that I think the King should quit Paris. He thinks otherwise, and fosters a thousand empty hopes and vain expectations.*

---

* On the morning of the 18th of July, Mr Morris received a message from Paul Jones, that he was very ill, and desired to see him. Mr Morris called immediately, and found him dying. He was in full possession of his faculties, however, and at his request Mr Morris drew his will, which was certified in a regular form by a notary. He went afterwards for the Queen's physician, Vic d'Azyr, and returned with him, but when they arrived, Jones was dead.

Some persons wished to have a pompous funeral, which Mr Morris declined, as involving a large and unnecessary expense, which he had no right to contract for such a purpose. He was censured in his own country, it seems, for what was considered an undue apathy on this occasion. Writing to Robert Morris some time afterwards, he said, 'It is somewhat singular, that he, who detested the French revolu

'*July* 20*th*.—This morning Bremond calls and tells me, that in consequence of the *mémoire*, which he made up from my hints, and which Monciel presented to the King, a conversation had taken place between, M. de Montmorin, and M. de Bertrand. He gives me the heads of the manifesto, which is to appear, and desires to know what step the King should take in consequence of it. He informs me that Mallet-Dupan is sent by M. Bertrand to be secretary to the Duke of Brunswick.

'*July* 24*th*.—Monciel brings me the King's money, at his Majesty's request, who tells him at the same time, that I have always given him good advice, and he has the greatest confidence in me. We consider what is to be done in the case of a suspension. Monciel and I go after dinner to Bertrand's, and bring him a good deal into our views.

'*July* 25*th*.—At a little after two M. Monciel and M. Bertrand come. I read the *mémoires* written for the King, at the time of his acceptance of the Constitution. We dine, and after dinner read the plan of a Constitution. Then discuss the steps which the King is to to take. M. Bertrand is a stickler for the *ancien régime*, but we drive him a little out of his opinion, which he will, I think, come back to again. He is to

---

tion, and all those concerned in it, should have been followed to the grave by a deputation from the National Assembly, and that I should read in your gazettes something like a severe reflection on me, for not paying him due respect; I, who, during his life, had rendered him all possible service, and possessed his confidence to the last, so that he wished to name me with you for executor.'

Mr Morris had met Paul Jones at Amsterdam, where he had projects of some sort in reference to Sweden, and Mr Morris wrote at the time, 'we adjust the means by which he is to get a direct offer from the Swedish Ambassador or Minister here. They have made a kind of indirect application through Kosciuszko.' He next had a plan for going round the Cape of Good Hope. Not long afterwards, he went over to England, and engaged in a speculation with Dr Bancroft for supplying the wool dyers with quercitron bark.

prepare tomorrow the form of a letter to accompany the manifest. Monciel is to be with him, which is right.

'*July 26th.*—Monciel informs me, that Bertrand has begun his work by mentioning the *cahiers*, which is idle enough. He is to see the King at eleven, and give him the result of the measures, which I have proposed, and which we have discussed.

'*July 27th.*—Bremond and Monciel call. We work all the morning to prepare some *mémoires* for the King.

'*July 28th.*—Bremond comes this morning, and after him Monciel, who stay till three o'clock. We finish the form of a letter from the King to the Assembly.

'*July 30th.*—Monciel calls to tell me he has delivered to the King the letter, and one from M. Bertrand, on which he has communicated his observations.—In the evening I go to Madame d'Albani's, where I find them all terrified at a riot, in which the *Marseillois* have killed one or two of the *Gardes Nationales.* There is much stir in Paris.

'*August 2d.*—M. de Monciel says they are trying to send him to Orleans. We agree on the conversion of the King's paper into specie.

'*August 4th.*—Bremond brings me this morning 5000 louis d'ors, which he has purchased. He is to have the correspondence of the Jacobins for 1000.—Monciel calls, and we complete a letter to be written by the King to the President of the section of the Fauxbourg St Marceau, about the river Bievre, which will, it is supposed, give his Majesty that Fauxbourg. Monciel says the King and Queen are much distressed and in great apprehension.—I call at M. de Montmorin's, where I find a family in deep distress. At my return home, I find Lady Sutherland at my door. She comes to obtain an interview between me and the Chevalier de Coigny. I tell her that I will be at home if he will call on me tomorrow. He wishes to give my ideas directly to the Queen, without passing through the medium of Monsieur de Montmorin. They expect all to be murdered this evening at the Château.

'*August* 5*th*.—Go to Court this morning. Nothing remarkable, only that they were up all night expecting to be murdered.

'*August* 7*th*.—This morning M. de Monciel calls, and the Chevalier de Coigny, with whom I have a long conversation on the state of affairs. Monciel tells me that the King would not listen to the entrusting of his secret to St Croix. We digest a petition for the Marseillois, calculated to make the King declare himself. Monsieur de Coigny is to push the same point with the Queen.

'*August* 8*th*.—M. de Monciel calls and tells me that things are going on well. The King seems to hold the proper opinions also, which is a desirable thing.

'*August* 9*th*.—This morning M. de Monciel brings me some money. I dress and go to Court.

'*August* 10*th*.—This morning M. de Monciel calls. His report is tranquillizing; but shortly after he leaves me, the cannon begin, and musketry mingled with them announce a warm day. The Château, undefended but by the Swiss, is carried, and the Swiss, wherever found, are murdered. The King and Queen are in the National Assembly, who have decreed the suspension of his authority.'

Except what is contained in the above hints, little is known of the scheme concerted between Mr Morris, M. de Monciel, Bremond, and others, for the removal of the King and the Royal Family from Paris. I find a press copy of a letter, in Mr Morris's hand writing, without address, date, or signature, which relates to this subject, and affords some further elucidations. He first gives an account of the discourse and memoir he had written for the King, respecting the Constitution, as heretofore noticed, and then proceeds in substance as follows.

His Majesty had conceived similar ideas to those contained in the project of a discourse, and unfolded more at large in the memoir accompanying it. He abandoned them with regret. Besides, he saw in the conduct of M. de Montmorin a finesse, which weakened his confidence in that Minister. At

the same time, the appalling situation of the King made it necessary to receive the services of persons, who were hardly known to him. Among those, whom circumstances had brought into the Ministry, was M. Terrier de Monciel, a man known by Mr Morris to be faithful to the King, although his connexions were such as might justly render him suspected. Mr Morris believed it to be his duty, therefore, to assure his Majesty, that he might confide in M. Monciel. The consequence was, that the King charged him with a very important affair, namely, to devise the means of rescuing him from his perilous situation.

For this purpose Monciel held frequent consultations with Mr Morris, and after considering the various means, which presented themselves, it was agreed that the only effectual course to be pursued was the removal of the Royal Family from Paris. The project for this enterprise was so well concerted, and the measures so discreetly taken, that it was hardly possible for it to fail. Just at that juncture it was renounced by the King, even on the very morning fixed for his departure, and when the Swiss guards were on their way to cover his escape. His Ministers, finding themselves seriously compromitted, gave in their resignations. The moment was the more critical for the King, as he already possessed proofs, that a conspiracy was forming against his person. One resource only remained, which was to get the victory in the combat about to be raised by the conspirators, as soon as they should find themselves in force.

M. de Monciel, having had an explication with the King and Queen, consented to serve them as before, notwithstanding he had retired from the Ministry. The plan was to collect, as soon as possible, a kind of royal army, an affair of extreme delicacy, which would inevitably endanger those engaged in it, if the enemies of the King should get the upper hand. M. de Monciel associated himself in this work to M. Bremond, a man of courage, zeal, and fidelity, but passionate, talkative, and imprudent. This last quality was almost essential, since

the situation of the Royal Family was such, as to keep at a distance all those, who were removed by the dictates of prudence, and whose zeal could be cooled by the prospect of a hazardous undertaking.

Towards the end of the month of July, the King sent his thanks to Mr Morris for the counsels he had rendered, testifying his regret that they had not been followed. In short, he desired Mr Morris to continue the aid of his advice in what was doing, and to become the depositary of his papers and his money. Mr Morris answered, that his Majesty might always count on his efforts; that the Royal House of France did not appear to him more sure than the palace of the Tuileries, since the King had long been exposed to the hatred of conspirators; that neither the King's papers nor money would be secure in his posession; but, as to this latter, he would not object to receive it, and hold the same at the disposal of the King, it being understood, that, in any event, no right of property on his part would attach to the money thus deposited. Hereupon the King sent to him, by the hands of M. de Monciel, five hundred and forty seven thousand and five livres. It was expected, that a large portion of this sum would be distributed among the persons, who were concerned in executing the project for removing the King from Paris, and it was in train for this destination by the orders of the King, on the second of August. To conceal the design as much as possible, it was the intention to employ the Marseillois. and other agents of the conspirators, and that no room might be left for deception and perfidy, the payments were to be delayed till the services were rendered.

The events of the tenth of August put an end to the whole affair. On that day M. de Monciel and his family, with many other persons, took refuge in Mr Morris's house, and ere long Monciel was obliged to conceal himself. Bremond was in the same condition. Madame de Monciel was charged with making arrangements for saving the persons, who had been compromitted, and some of whom, from their opera-

tions, were strongly suspected. D'Angrémont was seized, and condemned, but he had the courage to keep silence. The force of money procured the means of saving the rest, some by escape, others by concealment. Monciel went to London.*

The whole amount of money, deposited with Mr Morris in the King's name, was about seven hundred and forty eight thousand livres. Out of this, Bremond took five thousand louis d'ors, in a way not very satisfactory to the other parties, but to which they could not object without the risk of an exposure. Other large sums were withdrawn by Monciel for purposes above specified. The remainder was remitted to London, where advances were made to Monciel, till at last there was left in the hands of Mr Morris only the amount of

---

* An American gentleman, who was in Paris at that time, has published the following ancedote.

'On the ever memorable tenth of August, after viewing the destruction of the royal Swiss Guards, and the dispersion of the Paris militia, by a band of foreign and native incendiaries, the writer thought it his duty to visit the Minister, who had not been out of his hotel since the insurrection began, and, as was to be expected, would be anxious to learn what was passing without doors. He was surrounded by the old Count d'Estaing, and about a dozen other persons of distinction, of different sexes, who had, from their connexion with the United States, been his most intimate acquaintances at Paris, and who had then taken refuge with him, for protection from the blood-hounds, which, in the forms of men and women, were prowling in the streets at the time. All was silence here, except that silence was occasionally interrupted by the crying of the women and children. As I retired, the Minister took me aside, and observed, "I have no doubt, Sir, but there are persons on the watch, who would find fault with my conduct as Minister, in receiving and protecting these people, but I call on you to witness the declaration, which I now make, and that is, that they were not invited to my house, but came of their own accord; whether my house will be a protection to them, or to me, God only knows, but I will not turn them out of it, let what will happen to me"; to which he added, "you see, Sir, they are all persons to whom our country is more or less indebted, and it would be inhuman to force them into the hands of the assassins, had they no such claim upon me."'

six thousand seven hundred livres, equal to one hundred and sixty eight pounds sterling, after making a proper allowance for the depreciation of Assignats.

As before stated, there is no certain means of ascertaining the date of the letter, from which the preceding narrative is drawn, nor the person for whom it was designed, but circumstances favor the idea, that it was written at Vienna in December, 1796, and directed to the daughter of Louis Sixteenth, the present Dutchess d'Angoulême, who was then at the Austrian Court. He calls the person, to whom he writes, '*Son Altesse Royale*,' and '*Princesse*;' and, speaking of himself, in the third person, he says; 'For this reason he has come to Vienna, having no other object than to communicate the facts herein mentioned,' that is, the facts relating to the money. In the same letter is folded a press copy of an account current, exhibiting in detail the amounts received and paid out, and showing the balance in favor of the King. This balance, of one hundred and forty seven pounds sterling, he adds, 'Mr Morris will have the honor to pay to any person, whom her Royal Highness shall designate.' He also enjoins profound secrecy.

Bertrand de Molleville, in his Annals of the French Revolution, tells of another plot to rescue the King, of which he was at the head, and which, by his account, was in operation at the same time with this of M. de Monciel, and the King was giving encouragement to both of them, without letting the leaders of either know the existence of the other. From Mr Morris's Diary it appears, that Bertrand was with him and Monciel on several occasions, while their plan was in progress, and it might naturally be inferred, that he was accessory to their counsels, but from Bertrand's description of his own plot, and his surprise at detecting another at a very late hour, this is not probable. It must have been Monciel's object to amuse Bertrand, and quell suspicion of the doings of himself and associates. In this he succeeded. Bertrand's plan was suspended by order of the King, and its projector was neither

flattered nor pleased to discover, that his Majesty was secretly lending himself to another project, which he chose to shroud in mystery. It should be recollected, however, that, in the King's dangerous situation, it was both his interest and his duty to acquaint himself with the best means offered for his escape, and then to judge for himself. The principles of honor, as well as the dictates of discretion, forbade his disclosing the schemes of one party to the agents of another. His fault was to approve all, and follow none.

From the circumstance of the King's paying over so much money to promote Monciel's plan, it is probable he gave that the preference, and had resolved to carry it into effect. He evidently adhered to it down to the very morning of the tenth of August. Bertrand writes as if he had got correct hints of the details of that plan, though it seems quite certain he did not know who were its authors or abettors. According to him, the design was for the King and Royal Family to take the route to Compiegne, where everything was to be in readiness, in case of necessity, to convey them out of the kingdom, by way of the forest of Ardennes and the principality of Beaumont. This is not improbable, as it was a part of Monciel's scheme, if occasion required, to call in the military aid of Lafayette, who was stationed with his army in that quarter. Several other plans of escape, besides the two above mentioned, were sent to the King, and one in particular by Madame de Staël, the accomplishment of which was to have been under the guidance of her friend Narbonne.*

---

* Six years after the above events, Mr Morris met at Francfort, in Germany, a Mr Crawford, from whose account it appeared, that he had been a private agent from the English government to procure the removal of the Queen and Dauphin. The following is from Mr Morris's Diary.

'*Francfort, June 8th*, 1798.—Mr Crawford says he came to Paris in December, 1791, and continued there till April, 1792. He endeavored to persuade the Queen and Dauphin to leave France, a thing which, he says, the British government desired, as a means of saving the

Two or three notes from the Dutchess of Orleans, written at this time of perilous excitement and cruel disasters, will exhibit pleasing evidences of the goodness of her heart and warmth of her feelings.

The Dutchess of Orleans to Mr Morris, August 21st.—'I pray you to send the letter accompanying this to the person, who wrote to me by you. I feel that his departure will increase the void of which he complains, and I wish it were in my power speedily to lessen it. No more agreeable idea ever presents itself to my mind, than that of the tea-table, where the administration of liberty and equality is so well established. You encourage the hope, that this shall soon be renewed. I am again charged with gratitude, with thanks, with a thousand things, from my father. Madame de Chastellux will write to you the earliest moment. You do justice to all my sentiments towards you; they shall be as unchangeable as they are sincere.'

Mr Morris to the Dutchess of Orleans, September 7th.—'The letter of the good Princess reached me at the moment, when the horrors were beginning. They have not yet reached their limit. The vengeance of Heaven will, sooner or later, strike the wretches, who have escaped from human justice; and the God of peace and mercy, will, I hope, have pity on this people, pardon them, and give them at last repose and tranquillity. Ah! Princess, if virtue and goodness like yours were found in all, the exterminating angel would very soon sheath his sword. I pray you to present my homage to Monseigneur, your father, and to believe always in the sentiments of respect and affection which animate me.'

Dutchess of Orleans to Mr Morris, September 12th.—'Your

King, and even the monarchy. Crawford saw the royal consorts two or three times a week regularly; and the plan of the flight was arranged. But the Queen changed her mind, as usual, and declared that she would never separate her fortunes from those of the King. This determination so often resumed, or rather, as I think, instilled, proved her ruin.'

attentions touch me deeply. You share, I am persuaded, my father's grief and mine, and conceive in what affliction we are plunged. All the circumstances of this death are heart-rending; we are overwhelmed by it. To my affliction is added my maternal anxiety, which increases every day. My children were well on the sixth. They were at Toul. But how many events may have taken place since that time! Alas! We know but too well how many may happen in a very brief space. My father is always grateful for your remembrance. He charges me to thank you sincerely, and to speak well of him to you. Our good Mr Morris knows the value I attach to his friendship, and merits the sentiments, which I have devoted to him forever.'

CHAPTER XXI.

NEGOTIATION FOR PAYING A PART OF THE FRENCH DEBT.—DOUBTS RAISED IN THIS RESPECT BY THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT.—DIFFERENCES WITH THE FRENCH MINISTERS.—MR MORRIS DEMANDS HIS PASSPORT, AND THREATENS TO LEAVE PARIS.—CAPTURE OF LAFAYETTE.—VIEWS OF THE AMERICAN MINISTERS AT LONDON, PARIS, AND THE HAGUE, AS TO THEIR AUTHORITY TO DEMAND HIS RELEASE.—IMPRISONMENT OF MADAME DE LAFAYETTE IN PARIS.—DISAGREEABLE SITUATION OF MR MORRIS, AS MINISTER IN PARIS.—RETIRES INTO THE COUNTRY.—HIS VARIOUS OFFICIAL ACTS AND DUTIES.—IMPRISONMENT OF THOMAS PAINE AT THE LUXEMBOURG, AND MR MORRIS'S ATTEMPT TO PROCURE HIS RELEASE.—MR MORRIS'S RECALL.

One of Mr Morris's first official transactions with the French ministry, was an arrangement respecting the liquidation of a portion of the debt due from the United States to France. This debt had been contracted during the American revolution, the original amount being thirty-four millions of livres. The interest and a part of the principal had already been paid. In the year 1790, Congress authorized the President to borrow a sum or sums not exceeding fourteen millions of dollars, to be

appropriated towards the payment of the public debt. The business of contracting for the loans, thus authorized by Congress, was entrusted by the President to Mr Short, then Chargé des Affaires from the United States to France, and he received instructions accordingly from the Secretary of the Treasury to repair to Holland, and contract for loans on the best terms that should offer, within certain limits prescribed by the Secretary. The disposal of this money after it was borrowed, and while in the bankers' hands, as well as all arrangements with the French government concerning the debt, was also committed to Mr Short.

When Mr Morris presented his credentials to the King, as minister from the United States, Mr Short had already made considerable progress in negotiating loans, and there was at that time a large sum of money belonging to the United States in the hands of their bankers at Amsterdam. As the interest on this money was lost, while thus lying useless, both Mr Short and Mr Morris thought it advisable, that some provision should be made for paying it over to the French government, on account of the American debt. Mr Short had received his credentials and instructions as Minister Resident in Holland, and was obliged to depart speedily for the Hague. The question then arose, as to the person duly empowered to manage the affairs of the American debt. Mr Morris's instructions contained nothing whatever on that head, whence he inferred, that the President intended the business to remain in the hands of Mr Short. On the contrary, Mr Short considered his agency at an end, when the new Minister was accredited, and took it for granted that the whole business devolved on him. In a concern of so much responsibility and delicacy, however, Mr Morris declined acting, without explicit instructions to that effect. Nevertheless, as the public good seemed to require it, he consented to negotiate a payment to the French ministry, as Mr Short's agent, the latter promising to sanction any arrangement thus made, and to order the money to be paid for carrying it into execution.

With this understanding on both sides, Mr Short went to Holland, and Mr Morris concluded an agreement with the Commissioners of the Treasury, by which six millions of livres were to be paid to the French bankers in Holland, towards the liquidation of the American debt. On the 6th of August he gave notice of the same to Mr Short, who was then at the Hague, and requested him to make a transfer of that amount accordingly. By some accident, the letter conveying this information did not reach Mr Short, till the 16th of the month, very nearly the time that intelligence arrived of the revolution of the tenth. Here was a new and unexpected dilemma. The King was suspended, and the old government dissolved. Could the money rightfully be paid to the men, who had then put themselves at the head of affairs, and might perhaps be superseded in a week or a month by others, who would not acknowledge their authority, nor the validity of the payment? Mr Short thought not, and, moreover, believed, that he had authority only to pay the money to the King, or to the government existing at the time he received his instructions. At all events, he resolved to write to Mr Morris, and wait for his answer, as he had not heard from him since the events of the tenth. In reply, Mr Morris gave it as his opinion, that the change of government did not invalidate the transaction, and that the money ought to be paid.

Mr Short was surprised at this decision, so contrary to his own views, and to the views of almost every person whom he consulted, yet having great confidence in the judgment of Mr Morris, and believing it to have been the real intention of the President, that the Minister in Paris should have entire control in the affairs of the debt, although by some oversight nothing had been said about it in the instructions, he resolved to pay over the money. In doing this, he bethought himself of a mode of obtaining security for the payment, in case any succeeding government should disavow the transaction. It happened, that the Executive Council in Paris named as their bankers the same house in Amsterdam, which had formerly

acted in that capacity for the King. It was Mr Short's plan for these bankers to receive the money, as paid from the United States on account of the King of France, and for them to give a receipt in this form. To this the bankers objected, and would act only in the name of the Executive Council. At length, on the fifth of September, the money was paid, more, as Mr Short acknowledged, in conformity with Mr Morris's judgment, than his own.

As it turned out, although the new order of things in France continued, and there was afterwards no difficulty about the payments of the debt on that ground, yet Mr Short's sentiments accorded exactly with those of his own government at the time. When the news of the revolution of the tenth of August reached the United States, Hamilton, then Secretary of the Treasury, happened to be absent from the seat of government. He wrote immediately to Mr Short, directing him to suspend all further payments, adding that he would be responsible for obtaining the President's confirmation of that order. It was in fact confirmed, for the Secretary of State, in his first letter to Mr Morris, after the intelligence of the above event had been received, and when it was known only through the public papers, gave him the same instructions, advising him not to mention the fact to the existing authority, unless occasion rendered it necessary, and then with the assurance, that the United States had no design to delay the payment, and were only solicitous to pay the debt to such persons, as were really authorized by the nation to receive it.

Notwithstanding this coincidence of opinions between Mr Short and his own government, he was severely censured by the ruling powers in France. M. Maulde, then French Ambassador at the Hague, represented Mr Short's conduct in very unfavorable terms to the Executive Council, even affirming that he refused to pay the money, till a written approbation signed by the King should be obtained. This was an error, since Mr Short requested only, that the bankers would receive it in the King's name. The Ambassador also hinted,

that Mr Short's intimacies at the Hague were among the Foreign Ministers, who were hostile to the French revolution. The Executive Council, jealous of their new authority, wrote to Mr Morris expressing great indignation at these reports of their Ambassador, and adding their conviction, that the American government would disapprove, in the most pointed manner, the course pursued by their Minister at the Hague. All this, however, was manifestly unjust, because Mr Short, from the nature of the case, could have no other motive than that of doing his duty, by paying the money into proper hands.

Mr Morris had a concise argument, in regard to the validity of the payment. The contract had been made with the old government, and the money was paid to the only persons pretending to represent the nation. Should the King be restored, therefore, no future claim could be presented; and should the new order of things continue, the security was equally certain, for the money had been paid on that footing. But in case of difficulty on either side, the United States had the staff in their own hands, and could walk with it which way they pleased. They owed more money, and, in a final adjustment, could insist on this amount being allowed as a part of the extinguished debt.

While the above transaction was going on in Holland, the Executive Council labored hard to push Mr Morris into another arrangement, which he resisted. At this time the French government were furnishing large supplies of provisions to the inhabitants of St Domingo. An agreement had previously been entered into, by which four hundred thousand dollars of the American debt were to be paid in the United States, and expended there in purchasing provisions for that island. This was thought a favorable scheme to the United States, because it was virtually paying the amount to their own citizens, in exchange for produce, instead of sending it to Europe. It was now proposed by the French Ministry, to extend the sum thus expended to four hundred thousand dollars more. Some initiatory steps to this effect had already been taken with Mr Short.

In opening the subject to Mr Morris, the Minister of Marine first had an interview with him, and afterwards the three Ministers, Lebrun, Clavière, and Monge, in concert. He told them at once, that he had no instructions, and could not act. This they chose to consider an evasion, and said he must of course regard his instructions as adequate to the fulfilment of the essential functions of his office, and particularly to the completion of such business, as his predecessor had commenced. He repeated what he had often told them, that all money concerns were still in the hands of Mr Short. He then added, that even if he were to make such an agreement as they desired, it would be void, as he had no instructions to treat with the new government. On their own account, therefore, it was better for them to wait till he could write, and obtain the directions of his government. This last argument was little relished. M. Clavière, in particular, ventured some remarks, which Mr Morris thought indecorous, and to which he replied with suitable firmness and spirit. He maintained his position, that he could do nothing in this line without instructions. The meeting broke up with little cordiality of feeling on either side.

The next day M. Lebrun, Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote to Mr Morris pressing the same thing anew, in a style far from courteous or conciliatory. He spoke of the American Minister's *pretended* insufficiency of powers, and observed that, upon the principle of his having no instructions to treat with the new French government, his functions must have ceased altogether, and be then void. But he insisted that this was a false view of the subject, that the King was only suspended, and that, as the government itself was immutable, no Minister or Representative could refuse to treat with it, unless he had express orders from his court, or constituents. His instructions must necessarily remain in force, till countermanded. And above all, he was surprised to hear such an objection from a Representative of the American Republic. The part acted by France, in establishing the independence of that nation, (which

M. Lebrun modestly declared was her work) should not be forgotten, and, if gratitude slumbered, good will should be awake.

In reply, Mr Morris recapitulated the reasons, which rendered it impossible for him, without further instructions, to meddle in the affairs of the debt. On the other topic he observes; 'As to the supension of the King, Sir, you must surely agree with me, that a Minister has no right to express any opinion whatever, without the previous order of his nation. And when I spoke of it to you, I was not disposed to give my opinion; nor, at your solicitation, did I express anything farther, than that you might perceive that even if it were possible for me to run the risk of committing myself, by consenting to the pecuniary arrangements which you desired, and which were not confided to me by my government, you would still be unable to claim from them the execution of my engagements; for though they might recognise your authority, yet they would consider it necessary for you to wait my new credentials.' He then says, that he had recently given notice of his intention to remain in Paris, but the style of the Minister's letter was such, that he is now induced to request his passport, with the view of going over to England, and remaining there till he should receive further orders from the United States.

It was in this letter, that Mr Morris used the unluckly diplomatic phrase, '*ma cour*,' in referring to his own government, and which sounded so harsh in the ears of these newly fledged French republicans, that they never forgave him. It was treasured up with exemplary care, and figured long afterwards in the list of charges, contained in the memorable letter of Citizen Genet to the Secretary of State, written in consequence of the recall of that citizen being demanded from the French government.

The following paragraphs in Mr Morris's Diary would seem to imply a suspicion, that the offensive letter was dictated by Brissot, though sent in the name of M. Lebrun.

'*August* 31*st*.—Just before dinner, I receive an insulting letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the evening the Bishop d'Autun tells me it is written by Brissot; and that their intention is to force me into an acknowledgment of the present government. He urges me to go away, because all the others of the *Corps Diplomatique* go, and because I shall in staying be exposed to all the insidious malevolence of bad men. He recites a scene which passed in his presence, and which is alike shocking and ridiculous. He tells me that there is a division already among the rulers here. He communicates the views of those, who in the natural course of things must become strongest. I give him my reasons for thinking, that they pursue an impracticable object.

'*September* 1*st*.—I employ the greater part of this morning in making a reply to the letter of M. Lebrun and copying it. In the evening, I read both, or rather show them, to the Bishop d'Autun, who approves much of my answer, and observes that the letter is both absurd and impertinent. I had sent for Swan, and told him that his friend, Brissot, instead of promoting, had spoiled his business, and would drive me out of the country. He says that he laments this last point much, as a few days must overset the present establishment. I rather think he is mistaken, as to the time at least. And there may be yet many overturns before there is a settled government'.*

---

* The other Foreign Ministers had already obtained their passports, but not without difficulty and vexation.

'*August* 21*st*.—Visit Lady Sutherland to take leave. They cannot get as yet their passports. The Venetian Ambassador has been brought back and very ignominiously treated. Even his papers examined, as is said *by him*. This is strong, and raises in my mind a question, whether I ought not to show resentment by leaving the country. I have company at dinner, and in the evening I go to sup with Lady Sutherland. They cannot get passports. He is in a tearing passion. He has burnt his papers, which I will not do. They give me broad hints that honor requires of me to quit this country.

'*August* 29*th*.—The Dutch Ambassador tells me that he has received

Several days passed away before anything further was heard from M. Lebrun. At length an apologetical letter was received, in which he stated that his meaning had been misunderstood, and explained his views more fully, adding that he saw no reason why Mr Morris should not await his instructions in Paris, and hoped that on reconsideration he would decide to remain. This was satisfactory, and he concluded to stay, asking only for a passport to travel in the interior of France.

'*September 5th.*—Mr P. informs me, that the Ministry and Secret Committee are in amaze. Verdun, Stenai, and Clermont are taken. The country submits and joins the enemy. The party of Robespierre has vowed the destruction of Brissot. The Bishop d'Autun says, that he has seen one of the *Commission Extraordinaire*, that is, the Secret Committee, who tells him that there is the most imminent danger. I was told that one of the principal Jacobins had expressed his fears, or rather despair, not so much on account of the enemy's force, as of their internal divisions.

'*September 7th.*—The Bishop d'Autun says, that he hopes to get his passport, and urges me to procure one for myself, and quit Paris. He says that he is persuaded, that those who now rule mean to quit Paris and take off the King, and that their intention is to destroy the city before they leave it. I learn that the *Commune* have shut the barriers, because they suspect the Assembly of an intention to retreat.

'*September 8th.*—The Bishop d'Autun has got his passport. He does not think the Duke of Brunswick will be able to reach Paris, and he urges me strongly to leave it. I have,

---

his orders, and shall ask for his passports tomorrow. In the evening a number of persons enter, upon an order to examine my house for arms said to be hidden in it. I tell them they shall not examine,—that there are no arms, and that they must seize the informer, that I may bring him to punishment. I am obliged to be very peremptory, and at length get rid of them.'

however, received from the Minister an indirect apology for his impertinent letter, and therefore I shall stay.

This first intercourse with the new government promised but indifferently for the future. Both parties had got out of humor, and considering Mr Morris's well known sentiments in regard to the revolution, it is not surprising, perhaps, that he should meet with no more cordiality or comity from the successive leaders in the new government, than his official character demanded, or their interest in keeping on good terms with the United States made it expedient for them to show. Mr Morris's own impressions in this respect are discoverable in a letter to Mr Short, dated November 14th. 'The Ministry,' he observes, 'had taken up the idea, that the management of what relates to the debt was in my hands, and that you acted in consequence of directions from me. They wished me to do things, which were by no means in my power. I endeavored to undeceive them, but in vain. Every step I took in relation to it, however indifferent, was considered as a proof of their hypothesis, and they treated my refusal as a disavowal of the late revolution. I assured them, that I could neither adopt nor reject it, being merely an agent. But this answered little purpose, and the whole Council are personally my enemies. You may say that they are unreasonable, and the like, but that does not alter the thing.' In this affair of the money, Mr Morris must be allowed to have met the rude approaches of the agents of the Executive Council with moderation and consistency. He acted clearly on the just principles of the case, and from firm conviction of duty, without regard to political bias, or personal feeling. In whatever he had to do with the government, he encountered constant annoyances even in trifles. When he came over from England, he was obliged to pay duties on his carriage and other effects, at the custom-house in Calais, a charge from which Ambassadors and public Ministers are always exempt. For the honor of his country, he would not submit to a departure, unimportant as it was, from the usage of nations, and it took three

months of assiduous application and much writing, ere he could obtain a remission of the duties.

The revolution of the tenth of August may be regarded, both as involving the overthrow of the monarchy, and the annihilation of the constitutional party. The imbecility of the King, the intrigues and false councils of the Queen, the madness and folly of the high toned monarchists, had gradually undermined the little strength originally possessed by the Constitution, and treacherously paved the way for the ruin of its friends. Lafayette was at the head of the Constitutionalists; he had labored in that cause with an ardor and consistency worthy of his character, and sustained with fidelity the true interests of the King, long after he was himself deserted by that monarch, and denounced by his infatuated counsellors. He spared no sacrifice of courage and influence to resist the torrent, which the feeble measures of Louis was permitting daily to gain force, and which Lafayette foresaw would speedily bear away the landmarks of order, uproot the pillars of government, and lead in its desolating train a wild and bloody anarchy.

All his efforts, disinterested, daring, and chivalrous as they were, proved unavailing. Forsaken by his timid friends on the one side, and menaced by his frantic enemies on the other, nothing was left for him but to fly from a scene, where the arm of patriotic virtue was paralysed, and danger held out no hope for the brave. The Jacobins, resolved on his destruction, had decreed his arrest in the National Assembly; his army, hitherto faithful and devoted, were now becoming infected with the poison, that had wrought up to such a pitch of insanity the populace of the capital; emissaries were coming out to watch his motions, and doubtless to seize his person. At this critical moment, he left his army encamped at Sedan, and, in company with a few confidential associates, set off for the Netherlands, intending to seek an asylum in Holland, or the United States. At Rochefort, the first Austrian post, he and his companions were detained, and eventually conducted as prisoners

first to Namur, and thence to Nivelle, a town near the battle ground of Waterloo. Shortly afterwards, as all the world knows, they were transferred to the dungeons of Wesel and Magdeburg, and ultimately to those of Olmutz.

This treatment of Layfayette by the allied monarchs, like the partition of Poland, and other great acts of despotic infamy, has been viewed by writers of all nations and parties, with sentiments of unmingled reprobation. Even Sir Walter Scott, barren as he is of facts, and parsimonious as he is of justice, in all that concerns Lafayette, even Sir Walter Scott censures this conduct, as indicating a littleness of spirit disgraceful in a prince, and at war with morality, the laws of nations, and sound policy. Lafayette had to the last borne arms in support of the King; he had left France to escape the sanguinary violence of the very enemies, whom the allies were combined to crush; he had voluntarily put himself in the power of these allies; and yet, under these circumstances, equally forgetful of magnanimity, honor, and justice, they seized him as a prisoner of war, and treated him as a malefactor. Little could General Lafayette have anticipated such perfidy, and it was not till he reached Nivelle, that he was fully aware of the fate that awaited him in the hands of the allies. From that place, on the 26th of August, he wrote the following letter to Mr Short, Resident Minister at the Hague from the United States.

'My dear Friend,

'You have been acquainted with the atrocious events, which have taken place in Paris, when the Jacobin faction on the tenth of August overthrew the Constitution, enslaved both the Assembly and the King, the one by terror, the other by destitution and confinement, and gave a signal for pillage and massacre.

'I could have found a high station in the new order of things, without even having meddled with the plot. But my feelings did not admit of such an idea. I raised an opposition to Jacobin tyranny; but you know the weakness of our *hon-*

nêtes gens. I was abandoned; the army gave way to clubish acts. Nothing was left for me but to leave France. We have been stopped on our road and detained by an Austrian detachment, which is absolutely contrary to the *droits des gens*, as may appear from the enclosed Declaration, which I request you to have published. You will greatly oblige me, my dear friend, by setting out for Brussels as soon as this reaches you, and insist on seeing me. I am an American citizen, an American officer, no more in the French service. That is your right, and I do not doubt of your urgent and immediate arrival. God bless you. 'LAFAYETTE.'

The Declaration was published in the Leyden Gazette, a paper edited with much ability by professor Luzac, and which, during the American Revolution, had been firmly attached to the cause of the United States. The editor was learned and liberal, bold and independent. The above Declaration he published without charge, saying he was happy to do it as a homage of respect to the name of Lafayette. When Mr Short received General Lafayette's letter, he felt himself delicately situated, but a little reflection convinced him, that nothing in reality could be done. However strong his desire to rescue his friend, and however highly he knew such an act would be lauded by the whole American people, and by the generous and just in all countries; he saw clearly that he had no authority to make such an attempt, and that an application to the Austrian government, where he was not recognized, would be looked upon and slighted as a presumptuous interference. He conversed with the Austrian Minister at the Hague on the subject, who said he would write for information.

That he might leave nothing undone, however, towards effecting the relief of the illustrious prisoner, Mr Short wrote immediately to Mr Morris and Mr Pinckney, American Ministers in Paris and London, stating the facts of the case, and asking advice. Their letters in reply will be the best expositors of their opinions.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO WILLIAM SHORT.

'Paris, September 12th, 1792.

'Dear Sir,

'The situation of M. de Lafayette I have long lamented, and since these last disasters, I feel more than ever a desire to alleviate his distress. I had already meditated on the circumstances in which he might be placed, and his imprisonment was among those events, which appeared not improbable. The enemy may consider him as a prisoner of war, as a deserter, or as a spy. In the first capacity he might be delivered up, to be sacrificed by his countrymen; in the last he might be made the victim of resentment, excited by his former conduct. As a deserter, he is entitled to protection, but I doubt whether he would choose to be so protected.

'I incline, however, to the opinion, that the enemy mean to use him in a different capacity, and that his future treatment will depend entirely on himself; but at the same time, I fear that the employment they would give him, is not such as he will choose to engage in. Be all this, however, as it may, he is in their power, and they will do as they please. The reasons you urge for his liberation are cogent, and I hope they will be attended to; but power sometimes makes law for itself, and in such cases, it cares but little for history or posterity.

'Supposing that M. de Lafayette were a natural born subject of America, and taken under the circumstances in which he was placed, I do not exactly see how the United States could claim him. He was not in their service. If he had been made a prisoner of war, could they claim him as their citizen? If claimed and delivered up, would they not be bound to put him to death, for having attacked a neutral power, or else, by the very act of acquitting him, declare war against those who had taken him? Can the United States interfere in an affair of this sort, without making themselves parties in the quarrel? But M. de Lafayette is a Frenchman, and it

is as a Frenchman, that he is taken and is to be treated. Again, supposing the right as clear as it is questionable, I presume that before the United States made such demand, they would determine to go all lengths to establish their right, in case it should be refused; for otherwise by advancing the claim, and then receding, they would sit down quietly under an insult. Consequently they would consider well, before they placed themselves in a situation to be dishonored, or else drawn into a war.

'These are points of such magnitude, that I do not feel myself competent to decide on them, in behalf of my country; and, therefore, if I were Minister to his Imperial Majesty, I should, I think, confine myself to prayer and solicitation, until I received express orders from the President of the United States. But as I am not Minister to the Emperor, I rather think that my interference would prove offensive, and do more harm than good to Monsieur de Lafayette. And not only the Emperor, and perhaps the King of Prussia too, might complain, if they thought it worth while to take any notice of such unauthorized application; but the government of this country, also, might feel itself offended, and that in either of those events, which are now at the issue of the sword. If there was, however, any probability that a demand on our part would liberate him, it might be well to attempt it. You may perhaps find out how that matter stands, through the medium of the Court at which you are, and this it would, I think, be well to do. If the Austrian Ministry should wish an excuse to deliver him from bondage, they may admit of that which you mention, but certainly they will not consider it as a reason. I am, &c. 'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

THOMAS PINCKNEY TO WILLIAM SHORT.

'London, September 14th, 1792.

'Dear Sir,

'Among the afflicting considerations, which have impressed themselves on my mind, from the moment I heard of the mis-

fortune of our friend and fellow-citizen, the Marquis Lafayette, none have affected me with such painful sensations, as the conviction, that no exertions of his American friends can be of utility to him in his present situation; and since the receipt of your favor of the seventh, which did not reach me till yesterday, this subject has scarcely been a moment out of my thoughts. But I search in vain for some foundation whereon to establish a right to demand his liberation; and to demand it with a certainty of refusal, and with a consciousness, that such refusal may be founded on principles of propriety, would, without benefitting our friend, commit our country and ourselves.

'I feel myself, however, so much interested in this business, that it will afford me real pleasure to find that Mr Morris, or you, upon more mature reflection, have devised any plan to which my concurrence can add efficacy. And in order to evince the readiness, with which I contribute my endeavors to strike out some expedient, which may be serviceable, I venture to enclose for the deliberation of Mr Morris and yourself a rough sketch of a note, to which, however, I perceive forcible objections; and only submit it as the least exceptionable of such ideas, as have suggested themselves to me. A claim of the rights of an American citizen, to a person in the Marquis's circumstances, appears to me to be claiming nothing, and it can only, I fear, at best, serve as a testimonial of national gratitude, and may be a consolatory tribute to the feelings of a man, of whose services and zeal for our country there is I believe but one sentiment in America. If a measure of that, or any other nature, should be adopted, it ought, I conceive, to be so conducted as to avoid involving any discussion of principle, and should be the joint act of all the American Ministers in Europe, if distance of situation will permit their uniting in the time necessary to render it serviceable. I am, &c.

'THOMAS PINCKNEY.'

The draft of a note, to which Mr Pinckney alludes, was intend-

ed to be signed conjointly by the American Ministers in Europe, and sent to the Imperial Ministers at the Courts where they resided. It contained merely a declaration, that Lafayette was a citizen of the United States, an expression of confidence, that he would be protected in the rights belonging to such a character, and an assurance, that a liberal construction of these rights in his favor would command the utmost gratitude of their constituents. But the paper was never sent. The American Ministers were persuaded of the impropriety, and the total inefficiency, of any interference on their part, and were compelled to leave this early and ardent friend of their country to the rigor of his fate, watching only for such incidental events or circumstances, as might be turned to his advantage. So completely was he hidden from the world, that for a long time no intelligence of him could be obtained. Mr Short, by reason of the place of his residence, had the best opportunity of gaining information. He wrote to Mr Morris as follows.

'*The Hague, December 7th*, 1792.—As to our fellow-citizen in confinement, and of whom you desire to be fully informed, I can only tell you, that the most impenetrable secrecy has been observed with respect to him and his fellow sufferers. It is certain, that he is the individual of all France, that both Austrians and Prussians hate the most cordially. The desire of revenge, and determination to punish, made them commit the most flagrant act of injustice, and the most shameful violation of the *droit des gens*. They are probably sensible of it, and therefore wish to smother the whole business, and the victims also. It is certain the agents of the Emperor and of Prussia here, are ignorant of what passes; which is probably confined to the walls of the *donjon* of Wesel. It has been reported, that our fellow-citizen has lost his reason, and is in a state of insanity. Although I cannot assure, that it is not so, yet I should suppose it was not, from what these gentlemen have told me, though they can only speak from conjecture. In fine, I have never been able to learn a single word with certainty respecting these prisoners, since their

transportation to Wesel, nor has anybody else here been able to do it.'

When the news of these transactions reached the American government, they approved the conduct of the Ministers, and instructed them to spare no pains, by the use of all feasible means, to procure the liberation of Lafayette. The result is well known. There was no intercourse between the Courts of Prussia and Austria and the government of the United States, and consequently no mode of opening a direct negotiation. And if there had been, there was no probability of success. The allied powers had decided the point on grounds, from which they were not to be moved by appeals to justice, reason, morality, religion, or any other principles, which usually operate on minds conscious of rectitude and an honorable purpose. They had shamefully set all these at defiance, and yielded to a pitiful spirit of malevolence and revenge, in torturing a person of high rank and character, whom the caprices of fortune had betrayed into their hands. Would such men be influenced by the laws of nations, or the claims of right pressed upon them by Commissioners from the new world? Surely not. Washington wrote a letter to the Emperor of Austria, expressly in behalf of Lafayette, but it was disregarded. Any other application, through whatever channel, or presented in whatever manner, would have met with the same neglect. While Lafayette was in the prison of Magdeburg, some secret attempts were made by his friends in London to effect his release, but without avail. Mr Pinckney was consulted by the persons concerned, and he favored their plans, as far as prudence and circumstances would permit.

In the mean time, Mr Morris bethought himself of a different expedient. He drafted a petition to be sent by Madame de Lafayette to the King of Prussia. It was in the nature of a supplicatory address, and intended to work upon the gentler qualities of a heart, which had shown itself insensible to the higher traits of magnanimity and justice. 'He, in whose

favor I implore the mercy of your Majesty,' she is made to say in the petition, 'has never known crime. Faithful to his King, when he could no longer be of service to him, he left France. At the moment when he was made prisoner, he was crossing the Low Countries to take refuge in America. He believed himself under the protection of the law of nations, and he trusted to it with so much the more confidence, as the generous sentiments of your Majesty were not unknown to him. I may perhaps be blind to the character of a beloved husband, but I cannot deceive myself in being persuaded, that your Majesty will grant the prayer of an unhappy woman.' This draft was forwarded to Madame de Lafayette with a letter.

'Paris, November 7th, 1792.

'My Dear Madam,

'I need not tell you why the enclosed paper is transmitted to you. I know not the titles of the King of Prussia. These should be properly placed, you know, because monarchs are very sensitive on that subject. If reports say true, his majesty is more likely to listen to a woman than to a man, and this is favorable; but what would be still more advantageous, would be to have your letter presented by the favorite of the day. I am told that Madame de Guiche has lately received his adorations. If you were to plead your cause in a court of justice, it might be well to insist on the rights of our unfortunate friend, but as the person to whom you address yourself is both judge and party, the matter of right must be touched with great gentleness.

'Be of good courage, for sooner or later the present clouds will be dissipated. All human things are liable to change. You may remember, that I used to inculcate that maxim when circumstances were smiling. It was then true, and it is still true. But then it was unpleasant, and now it will afford consolation. Farewell, my dear Madam. It will give me sincere pleasure to be useful to you and yours.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

As soon as Mr Morris learned, that the prisoner in Magdeburg was distressed for money, he gave directions to the banker of the United States at Amsterdam to pay to his order ten thousand florins, stating at the same time, that he did this without authority, and held himself individually responsible for the amount. It was ultimately allowed by the government, under the name of compensation for Lafayette's military services in America.

The following letter, written in the prison of Magdeburg, by General Lafayette to the Princess d'Henin, presents a vivid picture of his sufferings in that dungeon, and at Wesel. The Princess d'Henin was then residing in London. By the advice of her friends, she forwarded to General Washington the *original letter*, from which has been made the translation here published.

'GENERAL LAFAYETTE TO THE PRINCESS D'HENIN.

'Magdeburg, March 15th, 1793.

'I am still alive, my dear Princess, and able to tell you so, but these are the only two important facts which I can send you. This letter is designed both for you and my wife and children, of whose place of residence I am ignorant, and for those among my friends to whom you and Madame Lafayette shall think proper to communicate it.

'You have been informed of all that has happened to us, from the time of the fatal rencounter at Rochefort, till, given up by Austria to Prussia, we were transported to Wesel. You must also have learnt some particulars respecting our captivity in that citadel. It would require a very long account to inform you of all the precautions, that were devised to cut off every communication between us and the rest of the world, to retain us in our prison, to watch us closely, and to multiply our privations. Lameth was dying for several weeks; I suffered very much in my lungs and nerves, from fever and want of sleep; our two other companions suffered also; and as the

King of Prussia had again prohibited us from taking fresh air, although the physician thought it necessary; as it had been signified to Maubourg, who was by accident apprized of my condition, that even on the bed of death we should not see each other; and as the commandant was responsible with his head for his vigilance, we were glad to hear of our removal, which would reunite us again for some time, and which, by enabling us to respire fresh air, would greatly contribute to re-establish our health.

'Our passage through Germany, whatever may have been the original intention, was most highly honorable to the martyrs of a glorious cause, and has not a little contributed to excite towards us a flattering interest, and ideas very different from those which were anticipated. The observations that were made respecting the last sixteen years of my life, the state of things on this side of the Rhine, and the spectacle of the four captives, did not appear to me during our journey to indicate anything that could alarm us.

'And now I will present you with a description of my prison and my manner of life.

'Represent to yourself an opening made in the rampart of the citadel, and encompassed with a high and strong pallisade. It is by that passage, that entering successively through four gates, each one of which is armed with chains, locks, and bars of iron, you may reach, not without difficulty and noise, my cell. This cell is three paces broad and five and a half long, containing no other ornament than two French verses, which rhyme with the words to suffer and to die (*souffrir et mourir*). The wall next to the ditch is dripping with moisture, and that opposite permits the light of day, but not the rays of the sun, to enter through a small but closely grated window. Imagine also two sentinels, whose eyes constantly penetrate my subterranean abode, but from beyond the pallisade in order to prevent our speaking to each other, spies set over us distinct from the guard; and in addition to this, the walls, the ramparts, the ditches and the guards, within and without the

citadel of Magdeburg, and you will see, my dear Princess, that the foreign powers neglect nothing to retain me in their dominions.

'The clanking of my four gates is renewed each morning, when they are opened to admit my domestic; again at dinner, when I eat in presence of the commandant of the citadel and of the guard; and lastly at night to remand my servant to his prison; after which, having made fast all the locks, the commandant carries with him the keys into the apartment, where, since my arrival, the King has ordered him to sleep.

'Books are furnished me, from which the white leaves have been torn out, but I have no news, no gazettes, no communication, neither ink, nor pen, nor pencil; and it is by a miracle that I possess this sheet, on which I write to you with a tooth-pick.

'My health declines; my physical has almost as much need of liberty as my moral constitution. The small quantity of air, which reaches me in this subterranean cell, affords little relief to my lungs; I am often afflicted with fever; I have no exercise, and little sleep; yet I make no complaint, knowing by experience how useless it would be. But I am tenacious of my life, and my friends may be assured of the active concurrence of all the sentiments, which lead me to value the preservation of my existence, although considering my situation, and the progress of my suffering, I cannot much longer answer for their efficacy. Perhaps it is better to prepare them in this manner, than to surprise them hereafter with the worst.

'The account which I have given you, will serve also for my three companions, whose situation is similar. I doubt if Lameth will long hold out; he was dying at Wesel, and is but little better here. M.de Pusy suffers much, although he is less ill. The same may be said of Maubourg, whose cell is situated on the same subterranean corridor with mine, and as, in order to prevent me from suffocating at once, they open the two innermost of my four gates a few hours before dinner, I am sometimes able, on the unbarring of his doors, and in the presence

of the commandant, to observe with much pain, that his appearance is greatly changed. Whatever care they have taken to tantalize us by the deprivation of news, we have at length obtained intelligence of the success of the French armies, the mismanagement of public affairs, the assassination of the King, in which all the laws of humanity, of justice, and of the national compact have been trampled under foot, and the abominable murder of my virtuous friend, Larochefoucauld; but all information respecting my wife, my children, and my other friends, has been so completely intercepted, with the exception of a few words from Damas at the time of our singular meeting at Ham, that I am in the most painful anxiety as to the state of all that is most dear to me. If it were true, as they take pains to tell us, but which I cannot believe, that all who do not abjure the principles of the Declaration of Rights must leave England, my family surely cannot be there.

'Ten thousand florins have been deposited here on the part of the United States, which sum will prevent me, when my own money shall be exhausted, from living on bread and water; but although my American friends are doubtless more occupied concerning my liberty than my sustenance, I have not heard anything further. I know that the Prince of Coburg has had great success against the dispersed detachments of Dumouriez, yet in the midst of the strifes of anarchy, and of so many hostile attacks, liberty, in spite of all her enemies, will not perish.

'This letter will reach you by way of Hamburg, but I know not through what channel. If any American should be there, it will be forwarded by him. I beg you to pay whatsoever shall be necessary, and to send letters in return. As I am ignorant what precautions will be taken, and only request you to avoid the post offices both in England and elsewhere, it will remain with the bearer, with you, and the friends to whom Lameth may write, to arrange this matter. But you will conceive with what anxiety I wait for letters from my family, and from you. I recommend, moreover, an inviolable discretion,

on which may depend the fortune and the life of every person, who, being under the rule of these governments, shall have rendered us any service; and the fear of compromitting them makes me weigh every word with circumspection, from which I flatter myself you will not infer any diminution of my fortitude.

'You will easily conceive how ardently we sigh for our resurrection from this tomb. It was neither just nor politic to arrest us, nor is it just or politic to retain us. This we have once represented; our friends may directly and indirectly often repeat it. This slow death is dreadful to us, and, without inquiring to whom it can give joy, I should be extremely glad if you could extricate us from it. Communicate to the family of Pusy and of Maubourg, who are in France, this intelligence respecting my two companions. Send us information of them, and in London see the friends of Lameth. They have each a servant, and I have two; one of whom, Felix, has been put into a separate cell, and the other, a native of Chavaniac, waits on me. We wish their families may know that they are not dead.

'If you know my aunt, judge how anxious I am concerning her health. I embrace my wife and my children. Adieu, my dear Princess; a thousand kindnesses to my friends; you know mine for you.

'LAFAYETTE.'

'P. S. I know not what disposition has been made of my plantation at Cayenne, but I hope Madame Lafayette will take care that the negroes, who cultivate it, shall preserve their liberty.'

Madame de Lafayette and her children, in common with most others of the nobility, were confined to their province. They continued at the family residence of Chavaniac, in Auvergne. Owing to a disastrous train of events, she found the state of her husband's affairs much deranged, and was particularly concerned on account of a list of debts to dependants and

other persons, who had rendered services to her family, and for the liquidation of which she considered his honor and her's as standing pledged. To relieve her anxiety, and enable her to discharge these debts, Mr Morris loaned to her from his private funds one hundred thousand livres. On this occasion she wrote to him ; ' In the midst of all its anguish, my heart truly dilates at this moment with the feeling of lively gratitude, which your goodness inspires in me. I already owe to you the hope of seeing the chains, to me indissoluble, imposed by honor and probity, broken. In any other circumstances, and even in these, were it to any other person, it would be very painful to me to incur such obligations, as I am now contracting to you; but I think of him, to whom I am indebted for the steps taken in my behalf, of those who with me are to receive the benefit of them, and I feel the consolation, rather than the weight, of these obligations. My gratitude to you, Sir, must be very sincere, and deeply felt, since it triumphs over all my resolutions, and I accept your offers of personal service, although I feel their full value and generosity. It would not be easy for me to express my feelings better, than by such confidence.'

At length Madame de Lafayette was brought up to Paris, and imprisoned. Her friends were naturally alarmed for her safety. Mr Morris made an immediate application to the proper authority for her relief, stating in substance, that he did not know whether she was brought up to be tried, or only to a safer place of confinement ; that he did not pretend to meddle with matters foreign to his mission, but thought it proper on that occasion to prove his attachment to the cause, in which the French were embarked ; that his letter was not official, but dictated by a friendly sentiment ; that the family of Lafayette was beloved in America, where the whole people entertained a grateful recollection of his services, and, therefore, the death of his wife might lessen their attachment to the French Republic ; that it would furnish the partisans of England with the means of misrepresenting what passed in France ; that so

far from conciliating friends to the Republic, it would gratify its enemies, who would rejoice at the destruction of everything, which bore the name of Lafayette.

This letter was written a short time before Mr Morris ceased to be Minister, and was succeeded by Mr Monroe. It did not procure her release from imprisonment, but it seems to have averted the catastrophe of the death, which awaited her, for, in writing to him a few weeks afterwards from her prison, she speaks of his having 'saved her from the rage of a monster, and prevented a crime.' Again, at a later period, in alluding to the money she had borrowed, she writes; 'this is a slight obligation, it is true, compared with that of my life, but allow me to remember both, while life lasts, with a sentiment of gratitude, which it is precious to feel. That life was restored to me, a more endearing gift, if it can administer consolation to him, whom I love.' This was written at Altona, after she had escaped from the perils, which threatened her in Paris, and was on her way, with her two daughters, to share the dismal fate of her husband in the prison of Olmutz. Her courage, constancy, and sufferings, in executing that bold enterprise, are well known, and their record is among the brightest pages in the annals of female heroism.

In the midst of the sanguinary horrors of Paris, Mr Morris was advised from many quarters to follow the example of the other foreign Ministers, and leave the country, but this he declined, and remained firm at his post, though surrounded with innumerable difficulties, and much real danger. He was at one time arrested in the street, because he had not a *Carte de Citoyen*, and taken before the tribunal of arrests. At another time, a body of armed men came into his house, for the purpose of searching it, although by the laws of nations it ought to have been exempt from all such intrusions. Again, on a short journey into the country, he was arrested and sent back to Paris, under pretence that the passport, which he had received from the government, was out of date. These insults, it is true, were commonly followed by apologies from the Min-

isters, chiefly on the ground of its being impossible to control all the acts of subordinate agents, during the violent scenes of revolutionary change. This was true, nor is it probable that the government were accessary to any direct marks of disrespect to the American Minister; it was their strong interest to pursue a different course. They were deserted by all the world, except the United States, and they could have no motive for offending and alienating this last and only friend. Such were the rapid transitions, however, from one form of anarchy to another, and such monsters worked their way through blood and carnage to the head of affairs, that the laws of nations and of honor afforded but a feeble security to any individual within the reach of their power. Indeed, Mr Morris had provocations enough for demanding his passport, and retiring from France, had he chosen to view them as he would have done in tranquil times, but he looked upon the public interests as paramount to all other considerations, and as demanding every personal sacrifice, not absolutely at variance with the honor of his country.

After the tenth of August his Diary became a barren record of unimportant events, and in the January succeeding he brought it to a close, with the following memorandum. 'The situation of things is such, that to continue this journal would compromise many people, unless I go on in the way I have done since the end of August, in which case it must be insipid and useless. I prefer, therefore, the more simple measure of putting an end to it.' He confined himself closely to his public duties, and all that is known of his ministerial career may be found in his correspondence of that period.

So critical was his situation at one time, that a rumor went abroad, and was circulated in the English and American newspapers, of his having lost his life. In allusion to this report, he wrote thus to Robert Morris.

'Paris, March 12th, 1793.

'My Dear Friend,

'I have received yours of the third of February, and reply

shortly, that I may reply immediately. My reason for which is, that I am told that the London Gazetteers have killed me, besides burning my house, and other little pleasantries of the same kind. Now as these accounts may be republished, I apprize you thereof, and pray you to vouch, that it was not true at the time of publication.

'You tell me that, in my place, you would resign and come home; but this is not quite so easily done as said. In the first place, I must have leave to resign from the President; but further, you will consider that the very circumstances, which you mention, are strong reasons for abiding, because it is not permitted to abandon a post in the hour of difficulty. I think the late decrees respecting our commerce will show you, that my continuance here has not been without some use to the United States. I am always and truly yours,

'Gouverneur Morris.'

That he might have retirement, and be freed from the confusion and disorders of the capital, he purchased a country house, and about twenty acres of land, at Sainport, nearly thirty miles from Paris, to which he removed, and at which he resided during the rest of his stay in France, except occasional visits to Paris. His secretary, Mr Livingston, remained chiefly in the city. He describes his country seat as an agreeable residence, situated on the margin of a small stream, and close upon the borders of the village of Sainport.

'My prospect,' says he, 'is rural, not extensive. At a mile and a half, on the southwest, are the ruins of baths, which once belonged to the fair Gabrielle, favorite mistress of Henry the Fourth; and at half of that distance, in the opposite direction, stands on a high plain the magnificent Pavilion built by Bouret. He was what is here called an *homme de finance*. He expended on that building and its gardens about half a million sterling, and after squandering in the whole about two millions sterling, he put himself to death, because he had nothing to live on. I think you will acknow-

ledge, that the objects just mentioned are well calculated to show the vanity of human pursuits and possessions.

'My time is spent in reading and writing, of which last I have not a little. The French privateers employ many of my hours, for the masters and agents of the American vessels they take, apply to me for advice and assistance. The other day I was desired, on the part of a merchant in London, to claim of the Ministry some rice and indigo; but I know neither by whom, nor when, nor where they were taken, nor where they are deposited. Without observing, however, on so strange and so lame a request, I desired the person who made it to appoint an agent in the port, with directions to state a proper claim before the competent judicature. I wonder what this person would have thought, had anybody asked a Secretary of State in England to deliver up goods taken by one of his privateers.

'I have had applications to grant the privileges of the American flag to vessels owned by Frenchmen and others. Some of the applicants were offended at my refusal *of that trifling favor*. The state of the government here is also a great plague, for it is difficult to discover the best mode of compassing an object, when the parties who are to decide are perpetually changing. Our old Congress was nothing to this Convention; and you will form a tolerable idea of the nature and extent of that influence, which the city of Paris exercises, from some late events.'

His official duties related to few objects, but these were incessantly recurring. They consisted (besides the money affairs, which have already been noticed,) in protests against decrees of the Convention of France, imposing restrictions on the commerce of the United States, and thereby violating the treaty between the two countries; in remonstrances against the outrages of French privateers upon American shipping, and reclamation of vessels unlawfully seized; in urging the petitions and claims of American captains, whose ships were detained in French ports on various pretences; and in applying for the release of American citizens, who contrived to get

into prison, either by being taken for Englishmen, or by some informality in their papers. These objects, in their various and complicated relations, required industrious attention, and careful management.

Some months previous to the end of his mission, Mr Morris was called on to render an act of kindness, if not of official duty, to his old friend Paine, who had found his way into the prisons of the Luxembourg in Paris. The reader will remember on what footing their acquaintance stood, in the days of the American Revolution. They had since met in England, where Paine frequently visited Mr Morris, and endeavored to interest him in a new bridge he had invented, in the intervals of his political speculations. Knowing Mr Morris's turn for mathematics and mechanics, he requested him to calculate the arch of his bridge, and to render him other assistance in that line. At length Paine came to Paris, being adopted as a citizen by the Convention, and chosen a member of that body by the Department of Calais. Here he renewed his visits to the American Minister, with a show of attachment; but Mr Morris discovered, or was confirmed in the belief, that he was playing a treacherous part, and intriguing against him. Paine was imprisoned as being one of the Girondist party in the Convention, and it is not exactly known how he escaped the fate of his confraternity. Mr Morris ascribes it to the contempt in which he was held. He had become extremely intemperate, and disgusting in his person and deportment. At his request, however, Mr Morris applied for his release as a citizen of the United States.

The application, it must be confessed, was neither pressing in its terms, nor cogent in its arguments. It was little more than a statement of facts, as to Paine's birth in England, and citizenship in America. In truth, Mr Morris did not believe he had any right to claim him on that ground, for, although he was once a citizen of the United States, he had since become a citizen of France, and in that character he was imprisoned. The Minister replied nearly to the same effect, namely, that in accepting the title of French citizen, and sitting in the

legislative councils of the nation, he had subjected himself to the laws of the Republic, and renounced the protection, which the law of nations and the treaties with the United States might otherwise have secured to him. The Minister's letter Mr Morris enclosed in another to Paine, who wrote in reply ;

'I received your letter enclosing a copy of a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. You must not leave me in the situation in which this letter places me. You know I do not deserve it, and you see the unpleasant situation into which I am thrown. I have made an essay of a letter, in answer to the Minister's letter, which I wish you to make the ground of a reply to him. They have nothing against me, except they do not choose I should be in a state of freedom to write my mind freely upon the things I have seen. Though you and I are not on terms of the best harmony, I apply to you as the Minister of America ; and you may add to that service whatever you think my integrity deserves. At any rate, I request you to make Congress acquainted with my situation, and to send to them copies of the letters that have past on the subject. A reply to the Minister's letter is absolutely necessary, were it only to continue the reclamation, otherwise your silence will be a sort of consent to his observations.'

This draft of a letter, to which he alludes, was ingenious. He first proves himself to have been an American citizen, a character of which he affirms no subsequent act had deprived him. The title of French citizen was a mere nominal and honorary one, which the Convention chose to confer, when they asked him over to help them in making a constitution. But let the nature or honor of the title be what it might, the Convention had taken it away, of their own accord. 'He was excluded from the Convention on the motion for excluding *foreigners*. Consequently he was no longer under the law of the Republic as a *citizen*, but under the protection of the treaty of alliance, as fully and effectually as any other citizen of America.' It was, therefore, the duty of the American Minister to demand his release.

Such is the drift of Paine's argument, and it would seem, indeed, that he could not be a foreigner and a citizen at the same time. It was hard, that his only privilege of citizenship should be that of imprisonment. But this logic was a little too refined for the revolutionary tribunals of the Jacobins in Paris, and Mr Morris well knew it was not worth while to preach it to them. He did not believe there was any serious design at that time against the life of the prisoner, and he considered his best chance of safety to be in preserving silence for the present. Here the matter rested, and Paine was left undisturbed, till the arrival of Mr Monroe, who procured his discharge from confinement. For several months he lived in Mr Monroe's house, but so intemperate were his habits, and disagreeable his person, that it was necessary to exclude him from the family, and send his meals to his own apartments.

Whilst Mr Morris was thus representing his country in France with dignity, firmness, and propriety, the Citizen Genet, French Minister in the United States, was, by some strange infatuation, practising a very extraordinary series of experiments upon the forbearance of the American people. These are too well known to need recapitulation. Suffice it to say, that the diplomatic aberrations of the Citizen Minister compelled the American government to demand his recall from the French Republic. This demand was transmitted through the hands of Mr Morris, and was acceded to immediately. In return, the French government solicited the American Minister's recall, which, as an act of reciprocity, could not be refused. No charge whatever appears to have been preferred, nor anything more than a request, on the ground of a 'reciprocal act.' When the Secretary of State communicated this intelligence, he assured Mr Morris that his conduct had given perfect satisfaction. The President likewise wrote him two private letters, containing the same assurance, and adding that his confidence, friendship, and regard, were undiminished. After these testimonies, Mr Morris had little to regret in resigning a station, which had been anything to him but a source of enjoyment.

He was not unprepared for this event. The persons in power he knew very well entertained towards him no friendly feeling. His former devotedness to the cause of the King, and the boldness with which he always expressed his political sentiments, had fixed impressions not to be removed or softened. Of this he was made fully aware, on more occasions than one; for, although his representations, relating directly to the concerns of his country, were duly regarded, yet in matters of minor weight, resting chiefly on personal influence, he met with delays and evasions by no means flattering. In one instance, a lady of high respectability, who had taken refuge in his house, and to whom he had afforded protection, was seized and imprisoned, contrary to his remonstrances and his claims under the laws of nations.

He had also heard rumors of the intention to ask his recall, and in such a way as left him little room to doubt the fact. It may be imagined, however, that he was not much gratified at the readiness with which a bare request for that object, unsupported by a single valid reason or pretended charge, was listened to by his government. The sole ground of his recall was the tenor of his political opinions, which had nothing to do with his character as Minister. After the downfall of the King, he had not entered in the remotest degree into the affairs of France, and, except the little altercation about the St Domingo business, which happened at the beginning of his mission, there had been a perfect harmony between him and the successive Ministers of the French Republic. He should be judged by his conduct after his official appointment, and not by his previous acts or sentiments as a private individual. This was a strong view of the case, and it no doubt occurred to Washington, yet circumstances wore a complexion at that time, which made it expedient to comply with the wishes of the French Cabinet in this matter, especially as it is desirable, in any state of things, that a minister should be acceptable to the government at which he is accredited.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR MONROE.—MR MORRIS LEAVES FRANCE.—TRAVELS IN SWITZERLAND.—VISITS M. NECKER AND MADAME DE STAEL.—BASLE.—SCHAFFHAUSEN.—PASSES THROUGH GERMANY TO HAMBURG.—RESIDES AT ALTONA.—TRAVELS IN HOLSTEIN.—ARRIVES IN LONDON.—INTERVIEW WITH LORD GRENVILLE.—COUNT WARANZOW.—MR PITT.—TRAVELS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.—BISHOP OF LANDAFF.—CONVERSATION WITH THE KING.—RETURNS TO THE CONTINENT.—VISITS BERLIN, DRESDEN, AND VIENNA.—SIR MORTON EDEN.

Mr Monroe arrived at Paris in August, 1794, as successor to Mr Morris, whose purpose then was to return soon to the United States. In the end, however, this plan was altered. He remained several years in Europe, visiting some of the principal Courts, and travelling through many countries. The limits of this memoir will admit only a brief notice of these peregrinations, and such sketches from his Diary, now again resumed, as will mark the occasional turn of his thoughts, and objects of his inquiry. He left Paris, on the twelfth of October, for Switzerland.

From the Diary, October 12th, 1794.—'Before I left Paris, Mr Monroe called on me and explained his conduct and his views. He begins to find out that fine words are of little value; and his letters from America show me, that something more is expected, and justly expected there, for the many violences committed against our merchants. In my opinion, he has taken the wrong tone at first, and will find much difficulty in changing it now. Time must determine a pretty serious question on that subject, so far as I am personally concerned at least. I have the consolation to have made no sacrifice, either of personal or national dignity, and I believe I should have obtained everything, if the American govern-

ment had refused to recall me. I rejoice that I am no longer in the pitiful situation, which I have so long endured. For the rest, experience must decide, and I hope that events will be favorable to America.'

On entering Switzerland, he passed a day with M. Necker at Copet, and another with Madame de Staël, who was then living in that neighborhood.

'*October 23d.*—Go to dinner at Madame de Staël's, where I am received with great warmth; the more necessary as I have a villanous ague. A good appetite at dinner, but the ague comes on very strong, and then the fever, which is gentle. We have much talk, or rather I have, for they are desirous of information both public and private; and I am more in condition to give it than most others. There is here a little French society, which live at her expense, and are as gay as circumstances will permit. The road to her house is up-hill and execrable, so that I think I shall not again go thither. On my return, being much out of sorts, I find the bed the properest place for me, and my pillow the fittest society.

'*Basle, November 9th.*—Supper is here, I find, the great meal; dinner being an affair of twelve o'clock. In going out this morning I observed that everybody as I passed saluted me with great respect. I thought it odd, that the manners of any country should extend so far the exterior of civility, and especially to strangers. It seemed like what we read of in China. This evening Madame Ehinger explains the mystery. In the same inn with me lodge some deputies of the other Cantons, who according to the constitution, pass three months here, and are even obliged to live in this inn. They, it seems, use the same coach which I have for this day, and, of course, all the profound reverences, which I observed, were made to me as deputy—perhaps only to the coach. This extreme respect for the Magistracy proves, however, in favor of the government.

'*Schaffhausen, November 15th.*—Go with Monsieur Huber to see the falls of the Rhine, and walk a good part of

the way, which I think does me good. We look at the famous bridge. I am not architect enough to understand it, but I wonder much it has never been imitated. If time would permit, I would get a plan of it, for it would certainly be useful in America. The cataract of the Rhine is a very fine object. The color of the water, which resembles that of the ocean, is prodigiously fine when beaten into foam. There is also in the little slope of the rock, over which it rushes down, an advantage of effect; for the river, instead of seeming to fall from the want of a support, as is the case in perpendicular cataracts, here leaps and bounds, and then precipitates itself, as if indignant that anything should have presumed to impede its course. The whole height is said, from actual measurement, to be between seventy and eighty feet, and the river is large. At the foot is a good salmon fishery; but they take these fish, I understand, with a harpoon only, and the amusement of angling for them is unknown. I had always supposed that salmon returned to the sea after spawning, but I find this is not the case. They are taken in the Rhine all the year, and in December the flesh is quite white and very soft and insipid. Those which I have tasted at Berne and Basle are very poor at present, and they are growing worse daily.

'While we are at dinner, a woman comes in to sell a curious kind of stockings. They are lined with a silky fleece of some animal, and must be very warm. She asks a guinea a pair for them, and tells us that the Duke of Wurtemberg paid her two guineas a pairs. M. Huber, who talks German well, offers for me one guinea for two pair. She declares she cannot take it; and, conversing of the value, she says that to an Earl or a Count they are worth three crowns, and therefore Englishmen ought to pay four. He being a Swiss, and I an American, we send her away with our offer, and presently after she returns and accepts the one guinea for two pairs. So much for the candor and plain dealing of the Swiss. I think I have observed in this country, that the spirit of commerce has operated in the cities a depravation of morals, which

nothing can cure but that same spirit carried still further. It teaches eventually fair dealing as the most profitable dealing. The first lesson of trade is, My son, get money. The second is, My son, get money honestly if you can, but get money. The third is, My son, get money; but honestly, if you would get much money.'

Departing from Switzerland, our traveller pursued his route through Germany, by way of Studgard, Wurtzburg, Cassel, Gottingen, and Hanover, to Hamburg, where he arrived in December. At this place, or rather at Altona, near Hamburg, he resided during the winter and the following spring. In May he made a tour through Holstein to the borders of the Baltic, visiting the cities of Kiel and Lubec, and the beautiful Lake of Ploën, the subsequent residence of Lafayette and his family, after their release from Olmutz, which Mr Morris describes as affording one of the most enchanting prospects, that he had ever beheld.

Returned from this journey through Holstein, which had been merely a jaunt of pleasure for two weeks, he went over to London in June.

'*London, June 29th.*—This morning the Count de Moustier calls on me, and we have a long conversation. He is working to place himself as one of the new King of France's Ministers, if I can judge of his views by his conversation. He tells me, that the King will be well disposed to conciliate with all parties. I mention the Duke of Orleans, but he thinks that plan may encounter some difficulties. While he is here, Mr Burgess comes in. He gives me a rendezvous at Lord Grenville's, and descants on the rights of *ci-devant Monsieur* to be acknowledged as king of France; whence I conclude, that the administration here lean to that idea.

'Go thence to the Marquis de Spinola's. The conversation here, where our company consists of the Aristocrats of the first feather, turns on French affairs. They, at first, agree that union among the French is necessary. But, when they come to particulars, they fly off and are mad. Madame Spin-

ola would send the Duke of Orleans to Siberia. An Abbé, a young man, talks much and loud, to show his *esprit*; and, to hear them, one would suppose that they were quite at their ease in a *petit soupé de Paris*. Our little Abbé tells us, that the leaders, finding how strong is the disposition of the people towards monarchy, will place the Duke of Orleans on the throne, and that he, finding it impossible to gain the good opinion of the gentlemen of France, must at length accept. I ask him, if it be wise to place him in that predicament. He answers, whether wise or not, the King will not be able to prevent his followers from insulting him. There is, I fear, too much truth in this. His connexion with Montesquiou is mentioned, as a sad blot in his escutcheon; yet Montesquiou, whatever may be his heart, is certainly one of their best heads, and they have not too many people of understanding among them. Burgess spoke of them this morning with much contempt, and indeed their conduct is not calculated to inspire respect.

'*July* 2*d*.—This morning at eleven, I wait by appointment on Lord Grenville, and stay till half past twelve. We have a long conversation on general politics, the line to be adopted by Great Britain in the present moment, and therein of acknowledging the French King. I mention the acquisition of Flanders by this country, and the advantages to be expected from it. His Lordship seems to be very attentive to this idea. I tell him my opinion of Prussia, and the relations in which it stands to this country, in which he seems to agree. I state to him what I conceive as practicable, respecting Austria and Russia, in the present moment, and show him how far it would affect France, by pushing the King of Prussia to extremity. This also strikes him forcibly. I state the various advantages, which might result from acknowledging the French King; the treaties which might be formed with him; the difference between appearing as auxiliaries and invaders; and further, the necessity of a moderate line of conduct on the part of the new King, so as to lessen, if not destroy, opposition to him. Touch on the means of keeping Spain steady. Observe to

him, that Sardinia must ever be the ally of France, and the enemy of Austria. I notice the state of Italy, and the utter indifference to Great Britain, whether that country continue in its present political form, or put on any other. He wishes to know the state of France. I observe to him that half a dozen different people, going through that country, will each give a different account of it, and that he can in his cabinet form a better opinion on principles, which I explain, and then add correspondent information. I take up what might be the feelings of this country, on the step proposed, and cite the conduct of Queen Elizabeth as an authority, which they would be little inclined to question, whatever might be its intrinsic merit.

'Having gone far into that affair, I then mention as a business I have no right to meddle in, but which, from its importance, presses itself upon me, the taking of our ships, and the ill blood which might thereby be excited; how useful it would be to give immediate relief, the very bad consequences of delay to the party interested, and its resulting effects on national feelings. He says, that he believes everything is done, which can be done, to give despatch. He then mentions a declaration by Mr Innis to the Governor of Kentucky, that the influence of the British cabinet has been used to prevent our success in negotiation for the free use of the Mississippi, and how injurious this is, as they are really desirous we should have it. He apprehends that the American government are not so well disposed towards Great Britain, as he had been led to imagine. I say everything, which appears to me proper for removing that impression, and suggest a confidential application by the British Minister. He states the danger of publicity from the nature of our government, and its consequent effects. On which I suggest a verbal communication to the President. To this also he is disinclined, as not coinciding with their habits of business; but wishes that I would write a private letter on the subject, which I promise. At coming away, he expresses the

wish to see me again before I leave town, also that Mr Pitt wishes to see me.

'Dine at Monsieur de Ciricello's, the Neapolitan Minister. The Duke d'Harcourt, who is here, speaks to me, first respecting the Duke of Orleans, and afterwards generally on French affairs. He has much the idea of re-establishing the Parliaments. I recommend, on the part of the new King, such general declarations as will bind him down to nothing, excepting a general oblivion of the past with very few exceptions. Try to convince him, that re-establishing the Parliaments will be, in the first instance, attended with much difficulty on the part of the people, and, in the second, will occasion much opposition by them to his measures.

'*July* 11*th*.—I call on the Count Woranzow, and show him the draft of a Manifesto by the new King of France, which I gave to Lord Grenville last Wednesday, and which he has returned with his wish, that it may arrive in season.* The Count Woranzow is well pleased with it, and thinks the Duc d'Harcourt should give money to the person, who will carry it to the King. I tell him that is a matter to be settled among them. He gives me an account of the strange levity, and wild negotiations of the Count d'Artois, and the pitiful folly of a M. Serenne, to whom he gives his confidence. He fears that, when arrived at Vendée, he will surround himself by such *petits-maîtres*, and disgust the chiefs, who have acquired the confidence of the people in that quarter, viz. Puisaye, Labourdonnaye, Charette, Stoflet, and wishes me to caution some of his *entours*. I tell him that would have no other effect, than to lead the person, to whom I might give such caution, into a communication of it to all those who are about the Prince, and by that means to produce the mischief we mean to avoid.

'*July* 14*th*.—Dine at Mr Pitt's. We sit down at six. Lords Grenville, Chatham, and another come later. The

---

* See this *Manifesto* in the present work Vol. II. p. 529.

rule is established for six precisely, which is right, I think. The wines are good and the conversation flippant. After dinner I have some further conversation with Lord Grenville, and mention *par hazard* Monsieur de B. my companion in a tour through the Holstein, his poverty among other things, and he says the means of joining the army shall be supplied. We agree that I shall give him, if still at Altona, a credit on my banker for £100.—He says he has taken the liberty to give Lord Macartney a copy of the Manifesto, which I had showed him, which I, of course, do not disapprove of. Indeed, I knew it before. I am to see Mr Pitt tomorrow. The mob broke his windows yesterday, and are rioting in Moorfields this evening.

'*July* 15*th*.—This morning at ten I visit Mr Pitt. I tell him that, as I presume Lord Grenville has given him the purport of our conversation, it will be best that he should ask me questions. He does so, and I reply to them. Our interview is long, and he is much satisfied with it. I recommend earnestly sending some man with the Count d'Artois, to keep him from doing foolish things. Ask the parole of Piquet's sons, which he promises, and to pay them £50 a piece. He asks me my ideas respecting a future Constitution for France, which I avoid giving as much as possible. Some points, however, are examined.'

Mr Morris passed the time from the middle of July, till near the end of November, in travelling through various parts of the Island of Great Britain. He first made a tour to the south, and thence to the north, going to Scotland by the way of Cambridge, Hull, York, Durham, and returning through Glasgow, Carlisle, and Liverpool. It was his object to visit the most remarkable places, and particularly the manufacturing towns, the economy and details of which he examined everywhere with a close inspection, and frequently wrote out elaborate descriptions of machinery, and the process of curious manufactures. It is to be feared, that the romantic, the picturesque in nature, and even the venerable memorials of an-

tiquity in art, had not many charms for him. Rarely is he found in search of these objects, and little does he say of mouldering towers, or ivy-crowned castles, or magnificent cathedrals; but in all the stirring scenes of life, where the agency of man is triumphing in its victories for the improvement of the social condition, you will see him busy, inquisitive, indefatigable, and elated with enjoyment at the wonders he is perpetually discovering. His thoughts were equally turned to the agriculture of the country, and the comforts of the people.

He went as far north as the Grampians, and passed a day or two there at the seat of the Duke of Athol, with which, as well as with the hospitality of its lord, he was much delighted. On his return, likewise, he visited the Duke of Argyle, and the Duke of Montrose, at their respective residences. He was pleased with Scotland, where everything convinced him, that the seeds of a progressive prosperity were deeply planted, and would have a vigorous and rapid growth. He loitered for a short time among the lakes and hills in the north of England, and spent a day and night with the Bishop of Landaff, at Colgarth Park, near Ambleside. The Bishop told him, among other things, that 'the day the Marquis of Rockingham kissed hands, on being appointed Minister, he showed him on the back of a letter certain conditions he had made with the King, and taken down with a pencil. The first was, that the independence of America should be acknowledged. The Marquis took that precaution, because on a former occasion the King had deceived him; and his Majesty was so hurt by that precaution, that he never forgave the Marquis.' The Bishop moreover declared respecting himself, that he was a staunch opposition man, and a firm, decided whig. To which the traveller adds in his Diary, let this be as it will, 'he is certainly a good landlord and a man of genius.'

From the lakes Mr Morris moved slowly onward, stopping at such places as he thought demanded attention, and arrived in the Capital on the twenty-third of November.

'*London, November 25th*, 1795.—Dress and go to Lord

Grenville's office; thence to Court. Lord Grenville arrives late. Am presented to the King, who takes me at first for an Englishman; and, not recollecting me, says "You have been a good while in the country." We set him right, and Lord Grenville tells his Majesty, that I was not liked by the ruling powers in France. "I suppose Mr Morris is too much attached to regular government."—"Yes, Sir; and if your Majesty would send thither your discontented subjects, it would do them much good."—"Well, if you 'll contrive it for me, I 'll give my hearty consent." Lord Grenville adds, "There are enough of them, Sir." "Oh, aye, quite enough." "I can give your Majesty good news from the continent," says Lord Grenville, "General Clairfait is still following the French." "And I, Sir, can give you a piece of intelligence, which I am sure will be agreeable. I am informed from unquestionable authority, that all the lower orders of people in Holland are strongly attached to the Stadtholder." "Ah! that 's good," (with surprise.) "Sir, they have always been so." "Then it is only the aristocratic party which is against him."—"Just so, Sir."—"Pray, Mr Morris, what part of America are you from?"—"I am from near New York, Sir. I have a brother, who has the honor to be a Lieutenant General in your Majesty's service."—"Ah, what, you're a brother of General Morris?—Yes, I think I see a likeness. But you're much younger." "Yes, Sir." "Well, and how does your brother do? He's at Plymouth, is'n't he?" "Yes, Sir."—I afterwards see a petition presented to the King on his throne, from the University of Oxford. Then go home with Lord Gower to see Lady Sutherland. Thence to the House of Commons. Return again to Lord Gower's and dine, and thence again to the House, where Mr Fox delivers a very animated speech, in reply to a very cool and sensible discourse from Mr ———. Mr Pitt does not speak, in which I am disappointed. On a division, the ministerial party has a great majority; and the affair is to be discussed again next Friday. Great acuteness on the part of Mr Fox.

'*December 3d.*—Go to Court. Count Woranzow tells me

an instance of Lord Grenville's candor. It relates to the Manifesto prepared for the new King. The Count has sent a copy of it, and a history of it to his Court. He introduces me to the Count de Staremberg. Lord Grenville introduces me to the Duke of Portland, and tells me that Mountflorence shall have his passport. He presents me to the Queen, who is a well bred and sensible woman, I think.

'Conversing with Lord Grenville about our treaty, I tell him that we must not covenant not to export the produce of the West India Islands, because our commerce will always give us an excess of those articles. That if I had to negotiate with him on the subject, I would almost venture to leave the settlement of the articles with him and the West India planters. That whatever may be the final state of the Islands, and whoever may be the possessor, it must be his policy to convince us, that it is our interest he should continue in the possession. He says that his opinion coincides perfectly with mine, and that he treated on that ground. I then tell him, that, in my opinion, all difficulties might be removed, if, after designating the size of the vessels to be admitted, a further stipulation should be made of a maximum of export duty, the amount within that limit to be fixed by the King. His Majesty's Ministers would then, by their instructions to the Governors, have it so fixed from time to time as to comport with the wants of the colony, and the interests of the British navigation, without any reference to the colonial Assemblies. He says that he thinks something may be made out of that idea. He says that Lord Bute informs him from Madrid, that Mr Pinckney is on his way back, having concluded a treaty of navigation, (in which he supposes the affair of the Mississippi to be settled,) and leaving the treaty of commerce for another year. I tell him, as I did the King, that their fears prevent them from treating; whereas those very apprehensions should have induced them to treat. He agrees in this idea, and adds, that it is inconceivable how apprehensive they are. I tell him that Mr Pinckney has asked for his recall, and that I do not think it improbable Mr Adams may be appointed Minister here.

'*April* 14*th*, 1796.—This morning I go to the Queen's drawing room. They are in high spirits. The Count Staremberg, who is overjoyed at the answer of the French Directory, speaks of it to the Queen as being a piece of very good news. She prudently answers in German. Asks me afterwards, if I understand German, on which I tell her, that I think she was right in speaking that language upon that occasion. "I believe it was prudent." "Yes, Madam, much more so, than the speech to which you replied." The King, however, is very open to Count Woranzow, and also to me, who arrive while they are in the discussion. He afterwards talks on the subject of finance with much good sense, but in English, so that Woranzow don't get his share of it.'

Mr Morris remained in London till June, when he returned to the continent, and resumed his old lodgings at Altona. He was engaged in making preparations for a journey to Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna. His plan was to travel with his own horses, and as those he had purchased for the purpose in England were young, restive, and not well broken to the harness, he was detained a few days in giving them proper lessons of discipline for their new task. This being accomplished, and all things else in readiness, he set off for Berlin. As he was approaching that city, on the day of his arrival, he held the following conversation.

'*July* 17*th*.—This morning at a quarter after six, I leave Fehrbellin with post horses, in order to spare my own. My *valet-de-chambre* has taken it into his head, that he is a man of genius, and so, in order to show that genius, he is very eloquent on every occasion in the very worst dialect of the German language. He is a very great patriot, as far as the abuse of Kings, nobles, and priests, may go; and, with high pretensions to superiority over his fellow servants, is disposed to consider himself on a level with his master. He says, that he despises Prussia and its government so much, that he never troubled himself to inquire about Berlin. However, as he sits next the postillion, this one tells him, that postillions are for-

bidden to smoke through the forests. That the Jagers, if they see them do it, take away their pipes; but yet the Jagers themselves smoke. He tells me this with much zeal and emphasis, to prove the oppression of the government. What a barbarous law against the poor!

'I humbly represent to him, that the poor depend much for fuel on these forests, which may be quite consumed by the carelessness of a postillion; that there is no great hardship in being deprived of the use of a pipe, while a man rides from one stage to another; that it would be, perhaps, a useful regulation of police to prohibit smoking everywhere, except in the apartments of a house, because villages may be consumed by it; and remind him of our anxiety on shipboard, lest the smokers should set the hay on fire. He takes his departure from this point, by asserting that there is much more danger from the use of flambeaux behind noblemen's carriages. I then again humbly represent to him, that in the dark, rainy, or snowy nights of winter, numerous carriages, driving about in every direction, and through narrow streets without lights, might not only injure each other, but prove fatal to foot passengers, wherefore it might be a useful regulation of police, to oblige those who use carriages to exhibit lights. On the whole, I desire him to inquire, whether a nobleman be not equally forbidden with all others to smoke in the forest. After some conversation with the postillion, he exults in the discovery that, though the law be general, yet the Jagers do not take away the noblemen's pipes. I take leave to suggest that, when a government makes just and equal laws, it cannot be blamed merely because some of those, to whom the execution is entrusted, wink at the breach of them; that we ourselves on entering the frontier found it convenient to encourage the officers in their delinquency, by way of expediting our journey. Here again, filled with patriotic zeal, he complains, that the portmanteau of a foot passenger would have been examined.

'I do not find it worth while to continue the conversation

farther, than to suggest, that the blame here, if any, falls on the officer, and not on the Prince; besides, that one, who travels in a chariot and four, is not likely to smuggle. But the postillion makes the best commentary on the subject, by lighting his pipe, and as the smoke flies in the other's face, and incommodes him not a little, I simply observe, that the poor can elude the laws as well as the rich. The postillion smokes on with great fervor, till the patriot loses all patience, and would, I am persuaded, if armed at this instant with legislative power, make it felony to smoke at all. I cannot help meditating again on this occasion, as on a thousand others, upon the manner in which travels are written. A man has adopted some system of morality, or politics, or religion, either from habit or whim, and, in the plenitude of his own infallibility, goes on condemning the practices of every other person and nation, catches up single incidents, and converts them into general data, by way of supporting his hypothesis, and fixing on special inhibitions, without seeking the reason of the law, condemns the legislator for those things which merit applause; and there, where he shows himself a provident parent, the self-conceited satirist marks him as the object of detestation.'

He continued in Berlin nearly a month, where he made the acquaintance of Prince Ferdinand, and associated chiefly in the diplomatic circles. The King and his principal Minister were absent at Pyrmont, but the Count de Haguenitz, another of the Ministers, treated him with much politeness during his stay. He had letters to William Humboldt, who introduced him to his friends in Berlin. The British Minister, Lord Elgin, was particularly civil. Among the French emigrants, he found some of his old Paris acquaintances. To the Baron d'Escar, who wanted to know if he thought anything could be done, to serve the wandering chief of the House of Bourbon, he replied, that 'in his opinion he had nothing to do but to try to get shot, thereby redeeming by valor the foregone follies of his conduct. Should he fall, this would rescue his memory

from reproach, and, if fate should direct away the shot aimed at his life, it might restore him to the good opinion of his nation; that there was very little chance of his being called to the throne of his ancestors, but if any, it was only to be secured by such valorous conduct, as might command the respect of the French.' The politics of Europe were the constant topics of Mr Morris's conversation in Berlin, as they had been in Paris and London. He talked in his usual free manner with the Ambassadors of different powers, apparently displeasing some, and impressing others with a high sense of the boldness, originality, and strength of his views.

'*July* 23*d*.—I dine very much against my will with Prince Ferdinand. I was engaged to a very agreeable party, but it seems the Highnesses must never be denied, unless it be from indisposition. I had, however, written a note declining the intended honor, but the messenger upon looking at it, for it was a letter patent like the invitation, said he could not deliver it; that nobody ever refused; all which I was informed of after he was gone. On consulting, I found that I must go or give mortal offence, which last I have no inclination to do; so I write another note, and send out to hunt up the messenger. While I am abroad this untoward incident is arranged, and of course I am at Bellevue. This Prince resembles the picture of his brother, the late King, but has by no means the same expression of countenance. The Princess is tolerably well looking, now that she is made up, and the children are rather handsome than otherwise. In the afternoon the Ministers of Spain and Portugal, with the Marquise de Nadaillac and Baron d'Escar, go to the garden at Charlottenburg, which they are so kind as to show me, and afterwards we take tea with Mrs Brown, wife of the King's physician, an English family. Here I see the Princess Auguste, youngest daughter of his Prussian Majesty, who seems desirous to please.'

Having staid nearly four weeks in Berlin, he departed for Dresden. On his first arrival he was met with a sight, which wrought upon his moral sensibilities.

'*Dresden, August 19th.*—In the streets are many French emigrants, who are travelling eastward to avoid their countrymen. They are allowed to stay only three days. Unhappy people! Yet they employ themselves in seeing everything curious, which they can get at; are serene, and even gay. So great a calamity could never light on shoulders, which could bear it so well. But, alas! the weight is not diminished by the graceful manner of supporting it. The sense however is less, by all that spleen and ill humor could add to torment the afflicted. Doubtless, there are many among them, who have a consciousness of rectitude to support them. This ground of hope in the kindness of that Being, who is to all his creatures an indulgent father, with the cheerfulness of temper, which nature has given to some of her favored children, may make their hearts beat lightly in their bosoms, while those of their more fortunate oppressors shall sink and sicken. For surely the oppressor can never be happy. I flatter myself with the belief, that a great majority of those in France would rejoice at an opportunity to call home their brethren, wandering in proscribed wretchedness through a world, which is to them almost a wilderness. But the day is yet, perhaps, at a distance. Oh God! it is thy wisdom which hath ordained, and thy hand which heavily hath inflicted this blow, consistent most surely with those just decrees, which we may not presume to measure, nor even dare to know, but yet we know, for we feel, that thy mercy will season to those, who suffer them, the sharpness of these afflictions. Yes, we feel! and it is this consciousness, which, previous and paramount to all reasoning, has diffused through the whole human race, and impressed on the heart of each individual, the same conviction of his own existence, and the existence of God. Yes, we feel! and it is in the strict accordance between our finest feelings, and the principles of the religion we profess, that this stands demonstrated by their evidence to be of divine origin.'

Here he first saw the Dutchess of Cumberland, and the Prince and Princesse de la Tour et Taxis, with all of

whom he kept up a correspondence for several years afterwards. The city of Dresden, its environs, its galleries of paintings, statuary, and other curiosities, drew from him stronger tokens of admiration, than he had before exhibited for similar objects in other places. He went to Court on one occasion an hour too late. Our readers will remember that in Paris he once went a day too early, and was reminded of his blunder by Marie Antoinette.

'*August 28th.*—Go to Court this morning an hour later than I ought to have done, owing to a mistake of my valet-de-chambre, who, with every pretension to genius, and the like, has the misfortune to be a little stupid, and, though he boasts of a knowledge of three tongues, seems to understand neither. The *Fourrier* had announced the drawing-room for *halb zwoelf*, which, being translated from the German, is half past eleven, but he rendered it *Anglicè*, half after twelve.'

After remaining ten or twelve days in Dresden, he pursued his journey, and arrived at Vienna about the middle of September. The English Ambassador, Sir Morton Eden, was among his first acquaintances in the Austrian capital, though he paid his respects on the day of his arrival to M. Thugut, the Emperor's Prime Minister, and to some of the Ministers of foreign powers, to whom he had letters. He seemed here, as in Berlin, to fraternize with the *Corps Diplomatique*, and was soon on terms of social intimacy with several of the diplomatists and their families, which brought him of course into the rounds of the first society in Vienna.

'*Vienna, September 24th.*—This morning Sir Morton Eden calls, and we go to Court. He presents me to the Emperor, who is ready in conversation. He is in very good spirits, having received favorable advices from the Rhine. The Archduke has driven the French back beyond the Lahn, and relieved the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein. A body of imperial troops is already up as high as Rastadt, in the view of cutting off the supplies of Moreau, who is still at Neuburg. The Emperor gives us his news, and expresses at the same time his

hope, that Moreau will not be able to effect his retreat. Indeed this hope amounts almost to expectation. He tells me, that in a month's time my way will be open into Switzerland, but observes that it will then be cold travelling.

'*October 26th.*—This morning Sir Morton Eden calls, and presents me to the Empress, who speaks a little to Colonel Hope, my co-presented, a few words to me, and has a long conversation with Sir Morton, who leans quietly against the wall. She seems to be a good sort of little woman; but, in the course of her conversation, she shows about the eyebrow something which bespeaks high spirit. She has the Austrian countenance a little.

'Return home and write for the post. After dinner, I visit Madame Audenarde, who asks me, if it be true that I am charged here with a mission from Congress to ask the liberty of Lafayette. I laugh at this a little, and then, assuring her that there is no truth in that suggestion, say that it is a piece of folly to keep him prisoner. This brings her out violently against him, and to the same effect the Count Dietrichstein, who indeed is as much prompted to defend the Austrian administration, as to side with his friend. We examine the matter as coolly as their prejudices will admit; and, on the point of right, he takes the only tenable ground, viz. that the public safety being the supreme law of Princes, the Emperor, conceiving it dangerous to leave Lafayette and his associates at large, had arrested them, and keeps them still prisoners for the same reason. Lavaupallière, who comes in during the conversation, shows still more ill will to this unfortunate man, than any one else. He seems to flatter himself, that there is yet some chance of getting him hanged. He treats him not only as having been deficient in abilities, but as having been most ungrateful to the King and Queen; from which last charge I defend him, in order to see what may be the amount of the inculpation; and it resolves itself into two favors received from the Court. First, pardon for having gone to America, notwithstanding an order given him to the contrary;

and, next, promotion to the rank of Maréchal de Camp over the heads of several who were, many of them, men of family. To crown all, he accuses him of the want of courage, and declares that he has seen him contumeliously treated without resenting it. To this I give as peremptory a negative, as good breeding will permit, and he feels it.

'Indeed the conversation of these gentlemen, who have the virtue and good fortune of their grandfathers to recommend them, leads me almost to forget the crimes of the French Revolution; and often the unforgiving temper and sanguinary wishes, which they exhibit, make me almost believe, that the assertion of their enemies is true, viz. that it is the success alone, which has determined on whose side should be the crimes and on whose the misery.

'*December 7th.*—Madame Razomousky entertains us much by the *histoires naives*, which she gives of herself in her presentation here as Ambassadress, and her reception at Moscow by her father-in-law. She is a fine lively woman, with a considerable share of genius, and most playful imagination. She admires much the Empress of Russia, not merely as a great sovereign, but as a pleasant woman, and tells among other things a story of a sleighing party, in which her coachman overset her, and excused himself, by saying that he had tried for an hour to overturn the sleigh of a page without effect, and could not have succeeded, if he had not seized that opportunity, in doing which he had unluckily gone farther than he intended. She smiled, and begged him in future to play such tricks when there was nobody in the carriage. This woman is, however, accused, and I believe justly, of many acts of a most serious complexion. But such is human nature.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR MORRIS'S ATTEMPT IN VIENNA TO PROCURE THE LIBERATION OF LAFAYETTE.—CORRESPONDENCE WITH MADAME DE STAEL ON THAT SUBJECT.—INTERVIEW WITH THE AUSTRIAN MINISTER.—LETTER TO MADAME DE LAFAYETTE.—ROYAL PRINCESS OF FRANCE.—AUSTRIAN NOBILITY.—LEAVES VIENNA FOR BERLIN.—CONVERSATION WITH THE KING OF PRUSSIA.—RESIDENCE IN BRUNSWICK.—RETURNS TO ALTONA.—LAFAYETTE'S RELEASE FROM OLMUTZ.—GIVEN UP TO THE AMERICAN CONSUL AT HAMBURG, IN PRESENCE OF MR MORRIS.

While at Vienna, Mr Morris made it a special object of his efforts to procure the liberation of Lafayette, then at Olmutz. He was prompted to this by many motives, though he confessed at the outset, that he had a slender hope of success. He could act under no other authority, than the influence of his own character; and he knew the little weight this must have in a case, which had become so notorious as that of Lafayette, and in which his oppressors had taken their stand before the whole world, on the sole and avowed ground of their sovereign will. To such judges it was idle to speak of justice or clemency, reason or truth. Of this he was convinced, yet the deep interest he took in the misfortunes of the prisoner and his family, not more on his own account, than on that of his country, and of the friends of liberty and humanity everywhere, induced him to make the attempt, which, should it prove abortive, could in no event do any harm. He received two letters from Madame de Staël on this subject, after his arrival in Vienna well suited to kindle enthusiasm in the coldest bosom.

MADAME DE STAEL TO MR MORRIS.

'Copet, September 21st, 1796.

'Sir,

'I have no right to take this step in addressing you. I esteem you most highly, but who would not esteem you? I admire your talents, for I have listened to you, and in this I am not singular. But what I have to ask of you is so much in accordance with your own feelings, that my letter will only repeat to you their dictates in poorer expressions. You are travelling through Germany, and whether on a public mission or not, you have influence; for they are not so stupid, as not to consult a man like you. Open the prison door of M. de Lafayette. You have already saved his wife from death; deliver the whole family. Pay the debt of your country. What greater service can any one render to his native land, than to discharge her obligations of gratitude? Is there any severer calamity, than that which has befallen Lafayette? Does any more glaring injustice attract the attention of Europe? I speak to you of glory, yet I know a more elevated sentiment is the motive of your conduct.

'The unhappy wife of M. de Lafayette has sent a message, in which she begs her friends to *apply to him, who has already been her preserver.* I had no difficulty in recognising you, under this veil. In this period of terror, there are a thousand virtues, by which they, who fear to pronounce your name, may distinguish you. For myself, who am more afflicted, I believe, than any one, by the fate of M. de Lafayette, I shall not have the presumption to imagine, that my solicitations can influence you in his favor. But you cannot prevent me from admiring you, nor from feeling as grateful to you, as if you had granted to myself alone that, which humanity, your own glory, and both worlds expect of you.

'NECKER DE STAEL.'

This letter Mr Morris answered, without giving any encouragement to his fair and gifted correspondent, that her

benevolent wishes could be realised. He lamented the misfortune of their common friend, but feared there was no immediate remedy at hand. What had already been done he believed was impolitic, and more injurious than beneficial to Lafayette. 'A commencement was made,' said he, 'by complaints of injustice, and a conclusion, by demands of reparation. Now you know, that men do not easily allow they have done wrong. Hence, they first defended themselves against the charge, and then, by means of disputing, both parties are angry. At last self-love takes part in the matter, so that the most urgent solicitations would perhaps be fruitless; for it would be difficult to comply with them, without admitting the injustice in question, since the circumstances have not changed, so as to offer either a reason or pretext for a change of conduct. But, persuaded as I am of the unhappy consequence of the detention of M. de Lafayette, I would use every exertion to break his chains, if I had it in my power.'

Madame de Staël replied to this by a second letter.

MADAME DE STAEL TO MR MORRIS.

'Copet, November 2d, 1796.

'Sir,

'The place where your letter was written, is enough to give me some hope. It is impossible you should be there without succeeding. Such glory is reserved for you, and there is none more delightful, or more brilliant, for you, or for any man. It is possible the opposition may have been indiscreet. But could the unfortunate man, of whom they spoke, have solicited it of them? It appears certain, that his wife was kindly received by the Emperor; that he permitted her to write to him, and that he has never received her letters. Humane and just, as we are assured he is, would he have suffered the wife and children to be treated in the same manner? The wife and children! What a reward for such a noble self devotion! It is as cruel, as the condition from which you once before saved her. What do they expect? Do they wish that the earliest

enemies of the unhappy man should be roused to claim, that a period should be put to his misfortunes? That they should imitate the demand of the Romans from the Carthagenians? It seems to me, if you were to speak for a single hour to those, on whom his fate depends, all would be well. I have such experience of your influence over opinions, which were even opposed to your own, that I am tempted to ask, what effect would you not produce, were you to lend your intelligence and talent to second the persuasions of interest? Should you ask this, as the reward of your counsels, could it be refused?

'In short, the idea that this calamity may be terminated, that it may be terminated by your exertions, this idea excites in me so much emotion, that, without disguising to myself the indiscretion of a second letter, I could not deny myself the expression of this belief, which arises as much from admiration of you, as from pity for him.

'NECKER DE STAEL.'

Not long after this letter came to hand, Mr Morris received the following letter from Madame de Montagu, the sister of Madame de Lafayette.

'Ploën, Holstein, November 27th, 1796.

'Sir,

'My sister is in danger of losing the life you saved in the prisons of Paris. Her tenderness and duty have conducted her, with her daughters, to that of Olmutz, where the utter privation of salubrious air has sensibly impaired the springs of life. Her husband, attacked by a disorder in the chest, will soon yield, perhaps, to the slow fever, which is consuming him; and the tender children will see the authors of their being, whom they came to serve and console, perish before their eyes.

'Madame de Lafayette has solicited permission to go and pass a few days at Vienna, in order to consult a physician there. This was not only refused her, but she was positively assured, that if she left her husband's prison a moment, she could never return. The only alternative allowed her was to

abandon him, or to partake all the hardships of his captivity. Her choice was not doubtful. She consented to breathe only the infected air of the place where he is confined, and to give thanks for the privilege allowed her.

'I have taken the liberty to address a letter to the Emperor, to denounce to him the cruelties, of which everything attests his ignorance, because, after having honored my sister with the kindest reception, he condescended to assure her, that her husband was well treated, while his keepers obstinately refused, for two years, to answer his questions respecting the existence of his wife and children. My remonstrance has remained unanswered. Has not he, whom Europe numbers among those citizens of whom North America ought to be most proud, has not he the right to make himself heard in favor of a citizen of the United States, and of a wife, whose life belongs to him, since he has preserved it? Yes, without doubt, and it is in this confidence, that I solicit your aid with the Emperor and the Austrian Ministry, and that I come to you to seek the hope and comfort so necessary to the wretched.

'My gratitude is already yours by so many titles, that to feel assured of it, Sir, you need only see the signature of your most humble servant,

'THE MARCHIONESS DE MONTAGU.'

At an tnterview with the Baron de Thugut, December the 18th, after conversing for some time on various political topics, Mr Morris introduced the affair of M. de Lafayette, of which he gives the following notice in his Diary.

'After having said as much as was proper, and received his thanks for the communication, I take out a letter I had received from Madame, la Marquise de Montagu, sister to Madame de Lafayette. Monsieur de Thugut contradicts the account of ill treatment, expresses the wish that they had never had anything to do with him, and assures me that Madame de Lafayette may leave the prison whenever she pleases, but that

she must not be permitted to go backwards and forwards. I solicit his release, but find that it is in vain. He says that probably he will be discharged at the peace. To which I reply, that I never had any doubt of that, and had taken upon me long ago to give such assurances, but that I wish it were done sooner; and add, that I am sure it would have a good effect in England, giving my reasons. He says that, if England will ask for him, they will be very glad to get rid of him in that way, and that *they* may, if they please, turn him loose in London.'

The next day Mr Morris wrote a letter to Madame de Lafayette, which he entrusted to the care of the Baron de Thugut.

'Vienna, December 19th, 1796.

'Madam,

'If this letter ever reaches you, I shall be obliged for the favor to his Excellency, the Baron de Thugut, and I shall expect from his kindness to have your answer forwarded to me. The Marchioness de Montagu informed me, by a letter dated November twenty-seventh, that you had been forbidden to leave the prison, unless you would entirely abandon the intention of returning thither, and that, under this alternative, preferring the duty of a tender and faithful wife to the care of your own safety, you have given that decision, which those who knew the purity of your mind would naturally expect from you. Madame de Montagu adds, that you are not permitted to come here for the purpose of consulting a physician, although the state of your health imperiously requires it.

'It is certainly unnecessary for me, Madam, to express here the interest, which I take in your fate, and in that of your unfortunate friend, and to tell you how happy I should be, could I procure for him his liberty. Reasons, which I do not know, and which I nevertheless feel bound to respect, prevent this. But we are far from believing here, that his prison has any other disagreeable things about it, than those which are unavoidably connected with confinement. I am assured, on the contrary,

that he is very well lodged, and in want of nothing; that the vigilant exactness, with which he is guarded, arises only from the necessity of using all means to prevent his escape; that, far from entertaining the barbarous idea of depriving you of the assistance of art, the physician of your choice will be sent to you; and that, if you are forbidden to come to Vienna, and then return to Olmutz, it is because circumstances require, that the rules of an exact prudence should be followed.

'You must not despair, Madam; time will give liberty to Monsieur de Lafayette; but, in the mean time, if he has been ill treated, as Madame de Montagu has been induced to believe, it is important that it may be known, in order that means may be taken to prevent it; and in case he experiences, in accordance with the benevolent intentions of his Majesty, gentle and humane treatment, it seems to me equally proper to ascertain it, in order to put a stop to odious reports, which cannot but exasperate, and which consequently might postpone the moment of his liberation. To this effect, have the goodness, Madam, I entreat you, to send me your answer open, under cover to his Excellency, the Baron de Thugut. I am still uncertain whether I shall be able to receive it at Vienna, as it is my intention to depart in a few days. But I flatter myself, that we shall meet again in America; and I pray you to believe, that I shall always and everywhere preserve the sincere attachment, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

'GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.'

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO THE BARON DE THUGUT.

'Vienna, December 31st, 1796.

'Sir,

'I have the honor to send you herewith a letter for Madame de Lafayette, requesting you in the first place to pardon me this liberty, then to examine the letter, and finally to have the goodness to transmit it to her. Your good sense will easily perceive the reasons, which have induced me to write to her, and will know how to appreciate them. It would, however,

be a most praiseworthy action on your part to suppress the letter, and to send me, in place of any answer to it, an order for the release of the unfortunate individual in question. In that case, I promise you not only the good news, which is expected from the Rhine, but also that which perhaps is not expected from Italy; which, like the favor I venture to solicit, will not be the less agreeable, for having been unexpected. You will probably smile at my absurd pretensions to the character of a prophet; but only promise me, that the passports of Lafayette shall be prepared three days after you shall have heard of the defeat of Bonaparte, and we shall then see what will happen.

'But for the rest, whatever may happen, I return to my first subject, and take the liberty of observing to you once more, that the sooner he is liberated the better, if, as I suppose, that is finally to be done. And since no one has had any right to know why his Majesty, the Emperor, determined to detain him as a prisoner, so no one can assume that of demanding why his kindness has set him at liberty. The maxim, *stat pro ratione voluntas*, may be applied to acts of mercy, as well as to those of authority; and, generally, if not with the same splendor, at least with the same dignity. Think, also, that forgiveness granted to others is the only unobjectionable title, of which we can avail ourselves before the King of kings. And may we be at last permitted to hope that the year, which will soon commence, may be crowned in its cradle by the hand of clemency, and in its course by that of glory. I have the honor to be, &c.

'Gouverneur Morris.'

He communicated, likewise, to Lord Grenville the result of his interview with the Baron de Thugut, and particularly what the Baron said, as to the readiness with which Lafayette, if solicited, should be given up to the English government. He pointed out reasons to Lord Grenville, why it would be good policy for the Ministry to take this hint, and procure the liberation of the prisoner of Olmutz.

But all these attempts proved ineffectual, according to his anticipations. As events turned out, indeed, it is probable they were immediately disserviceable to the prisoners. No answer was ever received from Madame de Lafayette to the letter, put into the hands of M. de Thugut for her, nor is it at all likely that it ever found its way out of his cabinet. What is more, the correspondence of Madame de Lafayette, with her sister and aunt, was from that moment cut off. They had been in the habit of writing once a fortnight, but on the twelfth of April, the last letter they had received was dated the twenty-second of December, a space of nearly four months. Observe, that this date was four days later than the Baron de Thugut's interview with Mr Morris, after which an order was unquestionably given to detain all letters. The reason for this may easily be found in the tenor of Madame de Montagu's letter to Mr Morris, which he showed to the Minister, and which contradicted all the declarations of the Court, respecting the treatment of the prisoners. Yet the picture there drawn was taken from Madame de Lafayette's own descriptions, written under the eye of the commandant himself, who surely would not have allowed her to make false or exaggerated statements, so much to his own disadvantage, and to that of his employers. It was the last resort of despotism, to hide its hypocrisy and smother the voice of indignant complaint, by closing the channels of knowledge, as it had entombed the living bodies of the sufferers ; a pitiful refinement of cruelty, to take away the only consolation that remained, and this under the slow torture of suspense and apprehension, lest some calamity might have stopped the pen, through which sympathy and affection were accustomed to speak.

'*December* 19*th.*—Mr Bacon, who is just arrived from London, says that the nation is still in good spirits, and fears little from the Spanish war. Monsieur St Priest tells me his news from Petersburg. The Emperor took his son to the apartment where Kosciuszko lay ill. He told the prisoner, that he saw in him a man of honor, who had done his duty,

and from whom he asked no other security than his word, that he would never act against him. Kosciuszko attempted to rise, but the Emperor forbade him, sat half an hour and conversed with him, and told his son to esteem the unhappy prisoner, who was immediately released, the guard being taken away. At the same time, expresses were sent off into Siberia, and twelve thousand Poles, confined there, received passports and money to bring them home. This story is afterwards told to me by Monsieur Lanskorenski, a Pole, who can scarcely restrain his tears as he relates it. They are all of them in ecstacy, and that single trait does more, in my opinion, towards securing the Russian part of Poland, than an army of twenty thousand men. But yet the character of the Poles is not such, as may securely be trusted.

'*December 20th.*—This morning I go to Court, for the purpose of paying my respects to the Princess of France, and in the hope that an opportunity would offer of saying a word on business which concerns her; but find that she has a large circle. I am led, therefore, to mention the object concisely to the Bishop of Nancy, who undertakes to open the affair to the *Grandes Maîtresses*, through whom it must pass to her Royal Highness. Dine at Monsieur de Staremberg's, and go from thence to visit the Archdutchess. While here, the Prince de Ligne produces some notes he has written on the Empress of Russia, desiring me to read them. We retire with the Prince de Saxe Teschen to an adjoining room, and look over them. On the whole, well written, and containing good anecdote, but smelling rather too strong of the writer. His Highness remarks to me, that a great part of it is calculated rather to display the intimacy of the Prince de Ligne, than the traits of Elizabeth.'

The *Princess of France*, above mentioned, was the daughter of Louis the Sixteenth, and Mr Morris wished to converse with her respecting the money, entrusted to him by her father, of which an account has already been given, in narrating the plan of M. de Monciel for removing the King from Paris.

'*December 22d.*—The Baron de Grosblaer comes in. He tells me that my arrival here occasioned much inquiry. People attributed to me different objects, and finding none sufficiently plausible, at last set my journey down to the account of Monsieur de Lafayette. I understand that all this arises from the Baron's curiosity, as much as anything else. I tell him exactly what has passed respecting Monsieur de Lafayette between M. de Thugut and me, also read my letters. Finally, tell him, that the only difference between me and the young Englishmen, of whom there is a swarm here, is, that I seek instruction with grny hairs, and they with brown.

'*December 25th.*—At the Archdutchess's one of the little Princes, brother to the Emperor, and who is truly an *arch* Duke, asks me to explain to him the different uniforms worn by the young English, of whom there is a great number here, all in regimentals. Some of these belong to no corps at all, and the others to yeomanry, fencibles, and the like, all of which purport to be raised for the defence of their country, in case she should be invaded; but now, when the invasion seems most imminent, they are abroad, and cannot be made to feel the ridiculous indecency of appearing in regimentals. Sir M. Eden and others have given them the broadest hints without the least effect. One of them told me, that all the world should not laugh him out of his regimentals. I bowed and told him, that the greatest monarch in Europe was not strong enough to brave public opinion. I see him, however, this afternoon in his uniform. I tell the Prince, that I really am not able to answer his question, but that, in general, these dresses are I believe worn for convenience in travelling. He smiles at this, and asks what can be the meaning of a blue coat worn by Lord Cowper, with gold lace, and a red cape. That, says he laughing, is I suppose a Court uniform. If I were an Englishman, I should be hurt at these exhibitions, and as it is, I am sorry for it. I observe, however, on this occasion what has often struck me before. They cite, as incontrovertible authority in England, the general conduct of

young men, from whence I am led to suppose that old men are in the habit of admitting the validity of such authority. And now I find that here they assume it as unquestionable, that the young men of England have a right to adjust the ceremonial of Vienna. The political relations of the two countries induce the good company here to treat them with politeness; but nothing prevents their being laughed at, as I found the other evening at Madame de Groshlaer's, where the young women, as well as the girls, were very merry at the expense of these young men.

'*December 28th.*—The Bishop of Nancy tells me, that the Princess of France has given no private audience to any one since her arrival, and found it proper to refuse it even to Count Fersen, who had been so long and intimately connected with the Queen. Her Royal Highness prays, therefore, that I will send her a note in writing, and if afterwards a few words should be necessary, I can take leave of her, and then, without breaking in on the established rule, such short conversation can take place. I tell him, that I will write as much as my time will admit, but as for an audience of leave, I consider that as improper, because I shall not take leave of the Imperial Family. But her Royal Highness may decide as she thinks proper.

'*January 1st*, 1797.—This morning I dress immediately after breakfast, and go to Court. The levee is oddly arranged, all the males being in one apartment, through which the Emperor passes in going to chapel, and returns the same way with the Empress and Imperial Family, after which they go through their own rooms to the ladies, assembled on the other side. The most brilliant thing here is the noble Hungarian guard, a body not numerous, of handsome, tall men on fine fiery steeds, magnificently caparisoned. The Captain of this guard, the Prince Esterhazy, who is but of medium size, or rather under it, is in a Hungarian dress of scarlet, with fur cape and cuffs, but the whole coat embroidered with pearls, as is also the cap, pantaloons, and boots of yellow morroco leather,

four hundred and seventy large pearls, and many thousand of inferior size. Notwithstanding this profusion, it is done in good taste, and cost but one hundred guineas for the workmanship. A collar of large diamonds, a very large solitaire in a ring, another in the head of his cane, a plume of diamonds, the hilt and scabbard of his sword set with diamonds, and even his spurs. In short, he and his horse, which is bejewelled also, though I did not see him, are estimated at a value of half a million of guilders, or about fifty thousand pounds sterling. His revenue, for he is the richest subject in Europe, amounts to from sixty to seventy thousand pounds, and has during the Turkish war gone up to a million of guilders. He lives in great magnificence, but without that useful part of it, hospitality. He has now above one hundred and fifty horses in Vienna, but had run out considerably before he came to his estate, and his father had also been in debt. This last, in a six weeks' residence at Frankfort, where he was Ambassador during an imperial coronation, spent eighty thousand pounds. In short, the estate is now dipped to betwixt six and seven millions of guilders, so that it is in the hands of creditors, who pay him a net two hundred thousand for his expenses, with which income he runs annually deeper in debt.

'Here is the history of the feudal system in its decline. Most of the great families here are doing, as I am told, the same foolish thing, and the government rejoices at the consequent humiliation of a haughty nobility, without considering that the power, which is to spring up in their stead, and which, being novel to the constitution, has of course no counterpoise provided, and is moreover increased by the impetus of progressive force, must at length, if it do not overturn the throne, give it at least the severest shocks. But who cares for posterity? If the Minister of the day can but live through his day, all is well with him; and throughout human life, the pressure of the moment forces men out of all the line of prudence. "*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*," is a motto, which might be annexed to almost all escutcheons.

'Monsieur Mazenski, a Pole, and grandson to Augustus of Saxony, was at Court today with diamond epaulettes of very large stones. It is said that he has the finest diamonds of any subject in Europe. But a finer thing than his jewels, or those of any other man, was the conduct of his servant, who, when his master was made prisoner during the late troubles in that miserable country, possessed himself of his valuables and whispered to him, "If you escape, you will find me at Leipsic." Mozenski was under the gallows, and saved himself by haranguing the populace. At Leipsic he found the servant and the treasure.'

Although Mr Morris made a protracted sojourn at Vienna, he speaks in no rapturous terms of the society there. He loved talking, and everybody in Vienna loved play, for which he had no relish. A dumb circle around a card-table he looked upon as the dullest company in the world, and usually escaped from it as soon as he could. Persons thus occupied are mute and deaf; they can neither talk nor listen; two sad obstacles, as he conceived, to all social pleasure. On one occasion, after leaving a small party, he notes it down as an extraordinary thing, that there had been 'some pleasant conversation.' The Austrian nobility he considered on the decline, and that the monarchy would one day suffer from the weakness and decay of this pillar of its support.

At first he intended returning by the south of Germany and Switzerland, but the lateness of the season caused him to change his mind. He retraced his steps, passed a few days in Dresden and Leipsic, and at length arrived in the capital of Prussia.

'*Berlin, February* 16*th.*—Go to Court, where I am presented to their Majesties. The King is a well looking man. He inquires about the health of General Washington, who (as de Moustier tells him) is in very ill health. I tell his Majesty, that I cannot believe it; that when I left him he was a hale, robust man; as much so as the King now is, and, of course, I have no reason to suppose that he is now seriously indisposed.

This is calculated for the poor Monarch, who has an air *très epuisé.*

'*February* 17*th.*—I go to Court. The Queen points out to me a young Mademoiselle Riedesel, who was born in America, and christened America. She is a fine girl, and when she comes down the dance, I tell her in presence of her Majesty, that I reclaim my countrywoman. After some time the King speaks to me, and, when on the subject of America, I tell him, that if the French persist in their present conduct, and drive us to extremities, Spain will not retain an inch of ground in the new world. That his Majesty has a direct interest in such events, and a considerable one. But a ball room is not the fitting place to discuss such subjects. On the finances of Great Britain, I repeated, (as having already mentioned it to his Ministers) that the resources of that country are immense. Upon which he observes, that they were so much the more to blame for having attempted to tax us, and this it was which led to what I have already noted. After some trifling things, I tell him that I have just seen his best friend. He asks who? And, to his great surprise, I reply, the Emperor. He speaks of him well personally, and I observe that he is a very honest young man. To which his Majesty replies by asking, "*Mais, que pensez vous de Thugut?*" "*Quant à cela, c'est une autre affaire, Sire.*" I had stated the interest, which makes him and the Emperor good friends, to be their mutual apprehensions from Russia. "But suppose we all three unite?" "*Ce sera un Diable de fricassée, Sire, si vous vous mettez tous les trois à casser les œufs.*" On the subject of Austria, I tell him they would do very well, if he would lend them a few of his Generals. "*Mais nous en avons besoin pour nous mêmes.*" "*Pas à présent, Sire, vous êtes en paix.*" He finds that, if this conversation continues, he may commit himself, and so pauses. I retire a little, and his Majesty conducts the Princess Henri out of the ball room.'

From Berlin to Hamburg, Mr Morris took the road through Brunswick, which he had designed as another resting place.

'*Brunswick, March 19th.*—I go to Court, where I dine, and pass the evening. The Duke and his family are *très prévenans.* He desires a little conversation, which begins after dinner, but is interrupted by his mother, to whom he presents me, the sister of old *Fritz*, and very like him. She has some eighty odd years, but is still lively, with a deal of fun about her. The Dutchess, who resembles the King her brother very much, is affable and pleasant. The Duke is, I think, a candidate for the character of the *omnis homo.* He speaks to me preferably in English, but not being master of the language, or entangled by the matter, he hesitates very much. He makes professions, which he considers as very dubious, and says—"You won't believe me, but it is very true." I tell him that the Prussian cabinet is afraid of him, and it is on that occasion, that he declares his unwillingness to manage the affairs of Prussia. To help him in his delivery, I observe that I conceive easily, why he, a Sovereign, should not wish to set the example of an imperious control over a Sovereign. This he assents to, but his objection is stronger, from the circumstance that a German Prince could not do many things, which would be suitable to an individual. I understand him to mean any dismemberment of the Empire, and so explain myself to him, or rather himself to me. He assents and comes forward with another *but.* But the Dutchess Dowager arrives, and terminates our conversation, which is to be resumed this evening.

'*March 21st.*—I dine with the Dutchess Dowager, who says she is very sorry her brother had not seen me. Her daughter gives me some late publications to read. I spend the evening there, and the Dutchess tells me, that the emigrants are much alarmed at my arrival here. I reply that this is to me unaccountable, unless they imagine that, recollecting their private characters in France, I should say something too much for them on that subject, but that they may make themselves easy, for it is possible I may never have heard anything, but I certainly have forgotten all which may affect the moral character of individuals belonging to a country, which was so gener-

ally corrupted. I see here the Prince Gallitzin, whom I had formerly known at Hamburg. I visited in the afternoon Madame de Riedesel, who reminds me that we had met at Amsterdam.*

'*March 25th.*—Dine with the Dutchess, who tells me that she is sure I don't like her—that she likes me, but I don't like her. She thinks that I hate the King, her brother, and extend that dislike to the whole family. I assure her that she is mistaken, and that nothing is easier than for me, as an American, to be attached to the Royal Family of England, but nothing more difficult, than for a person of that family to like one of my country. "Well then I have the more merit, for I like you." This conversation, which lasts during the dinner, and before a numerous society, would be very embarrassing to most men; and I am afterwards complimented by several, for getting through it so well. She said, among other things, that she had persuaded herself to forget there was such a country as America. On the whole, I am well pleased with her *franchise*, and tell her truly, that I am well pleased with her. Converse a little with the Duke confidentially, and give him some traits of Berlin, which he was unacquainted with. Mention the only means, which seem to me fit for bringing the Prussian Cabinet into his views. He tells me that it is now

---

*The wife of General Riedesel, who commanded the Brunswick troops under Burgoyne, and surrendered with them at Saratoga. This lady's *Memoirs* of her life in America, during the war, which have been recently translated into English, by M. de Wallenstein, are in a high degree spirited and entertaining. Mr Morris makes the following entrance in his Diary at Amsterdam.

'General Riedesel, who lodges in the same house, makes me a visit, and we converse about the compaign in which he was taken. He says, that Burgoyne was very reprehensible in not insisting, that the troops should return to Canada, because Gates would certainly have consented; and that, while the negotiation was pending, and substantially, but not formally concluded, Burgoyne proposed to break it off, upon receiving the news of the burning of Esopus.'

too late, in which sentiment I fully agree with him. I brought General Riedesel home with me to tea, and we went together to the Hereditary Princess's, where I pass the evening.'

On the ninth of April, our traveller found himself at rest again in his old lodgings at Altona, after an absence of eight months and a half. His correspondence during this period, particularly with Lord Grenville, shows with what profound attention he examined the political state of the countries through which he passed, and the character and policy of the principal actors. They will also show, amidst some little exuberance of fancy, a mind viewing human affairs on a large scale, and fixing what is usually called human greatness at its true standard. His speculations, like all other speculations, were sometimes visionary, and his predictions, like those of most prophets, did not always come to pass, yet his judgment of realities, his insight into the nature of events, and his estimate of the motives of men, were seldom erroneous. From the exhibition of his political tendencies in Paris, and from his thorough dislike, both in principle and practice, of the new systems of rule in France, it is no cause of surprise, that in Germany his feelings should be enlisted on the side of the allies, and that he should lament with them the successes of Bonaparte in Italy, and of Moreau on the Danube. He had three rare qualities, which never deserted him, independence in forming an opinion, boldness in avowing, and consistency in maintaining it. Not that he was obstinate, for he loved argument, was accessible to reason, and never too proud to be convinced, but while his convictions lasted, they were the guide of his thoughts and his acts, proclaimed without fear, and obeyed as fixed laws.

In a circle of friends at Hamburg and Altona, to whom he had become much attached, Mr Morris remained quietly till June, when he repeated his journey through Holstein, from which he had derived so much pleasure two years before. At Wittmold, near Ploën, he visited Madame de Tessé, and Madame de Montagu, and told them personally all he knew

concerning the prisoners at Olmutz, and of all he had done to restore them to liberty. But the time was near at hand, when their wishes in this respect were to be consummated.

The treaty of Leoben, preliminary to that of Campo Formio, had paved the way for a peace, and it is understood to have been among the requisitions of Bonaparte, that Lafayette and the other prisoners at Olmutz should be released. They were accordingly liberated on the nineteenth of September, and General Lafayette, at his own request, was delivered up to the American Consul at Hamburg. This ceremony took place on the fourth of October, in the presence of Mr Morris, who thus speaks of this affair in his Diary.

'*September 27th.*—Mr Parish and his son call on me this evening. He has adjusted with the Imperial Minister here how Lafayette is to be delivered over. The Minister communicated M. de Thugut's letter, which says expressly that M. de Lafayette is not liberated at the instance of France, but merely to show the Emperor's consideration for the United States of America.

'*October 4th.*—Dine with the Baron Buol de Schauenstein, the Imperial Minister. It is not till after five, that Mr Parish sends word that M. de Lafayette and his companions are come, and then I take the Baron down to perform the ceremony of delivering them over. His expressions are *très mésurés*, and he goes through his part with dignity.'

From these notes it was obviously Mr Morris's impression at the time, that Lafayette was restored to freedom by the Austrian government, out of regard to the United States, and not by reason of any interference of the French. In a letter to Judge Marshall, written after his return to America, he repeats the same conviction, and adds, 'notwithstanding this, it appeared to me that M. de Lafayette chose to consider himself as freed by the influence of General Bonaparte, and I did not choose to contest the matter, because, believing my application had procured his liberty, it would have looked like claiming acknowledgments. Had I known of the Presi-

dent's letter,* I should certainly have connected with it the manner in which he was delivered over, and drawn the natural inference.' To this it may be added, that, in an account of the ceremony written by Mr Parish, and published at Philadelphia in the Port Folio, the letter of M. Thugut to M. Buol de Schauenstein is cited, as containing the same language as that recorded in Mr Morris's Diary.

After all, we may probably take the following to be the true state of the case. The condition of the prisoners at Olmutz was discussed at Leoben. Bonaparte requested their release, which was readily granted, since M. Thugut had declared to Mr Morris, that they would naturally be given up at the peace. They must not be regarded, however, in the light of the prisoners of war, for these were not discharged till after the definitive treaty of Campo Formio, whereas Lafayette was released a month before the signature of that treaty. In this stage of the business, as it would require no sacrifice on the part of the Austrian government, there being no published stipulation with the French negotiator, it was convenient for them to give it the air of a favor to the United States, and to make the most of it in that shape. Had it come a year, or even six months earlier, it would have borne stronger marks of sincerity.†

---

* General Washington's letter to the Emperor of Austria, soliciting the liberation of M. de Lafayette.

† Sir Walter Scott says, in speaking of the liberation of Lafayette; 'Finally, on the nineteenth of December, 1795, this last remaining relic of Louis (the Princess Royal) was permitted to leave her prison and her country, in exchange for Lafayette and others, whom, on that condition, Austria delivered from captivity.'—*Life of Napoleon, Vol. II. Chap. 5.*

Here are two remarkable errors; first, as to the time of liberation, it being stated a year and nine months too early; and, secondly, as to the reason and mode of release.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR MORRIS COMMENCES ANOTHER TOUR TO THE SOUTH OF GERMANY.—FRANCFORT, RATISBON, MUNICH.—COUNT RUMFORD.—MR MORRIS RETURNS TO ALTONA.—DUKE OF ORLEANS.—HIS CONCEALMENT IN SWITZERLAND.—LETTERS FROM THE COUNTESS DE FLAHAUT TO MR MORRIS CONCERNING HIM.—THEY TRAVEL TOGETHER TO HAMBURG.—THE DUKE'S TRAVELS IN NORWAY AND SWEDEN.—HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR MORRIS.—HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES.

As soon as this ceremony was over, and he had finished the necessary preparations, Mr Morris commenced another tour into Germany. He went by the way of Hanover and Cassel to Francfort. Here he found the Dutchess of Cumberland, with whom he had become acquainted at Dresden, and who entertained him with much curious matter about the private histories of some of the Royal Families of Europe. From Francfort he proceeded to Ratisbon, where he met other old acquaintances, in the circle of the Princess de la Tour et Taxis. The charms of this society retained him two or three weeks. At Munich he was received with marked kindness by his countryman, Count Rumford, who was at that time enjoying the glory of his high reputation as a civil economist, and as having been successful in his great and humane projects for improving the capital of Bavaria, and ameliorating the condition of the people.

'*Munich, December* 31*st*.—I go to the Count Rumford's, as I had promised yesterday, and he tells me his situation here as to the confidence reposed in him by the Elector. He brought him into his views of reform by holding out, that history never fails to do justice to sovereigns, recording their acts of beneficence, and branding them for the neglect of their important duties. According to the Count, it is from the love of honest

fame that the Elector has been stimulated to the amelioration and embellishment of his country, to which he had but little personal attachment ; and, being without heirs, and not too well disposed to his successor, could not from any regard to posterity be led into the labor and vexation of reform. He states to me how by degrees, since the commencement of the fourteenth century, the existing nobles, or rather ennobled, who are by no means descendants of the ancient nobility, all of whose privileges, with a single exception, have by purchase or escheat merged in the Ducal Crown, have arrogated, from the weakness of the chief, privileges and exemptions to which they are not entitled, and under the name of the States oppress and defraud the people, so that at length the abuses are become equally numerous and enormous, from whence has resulted the impoverishment and depopulation of this excellent country. Among the abuses, he mentions as one, that on his arrival here there was a regiment of cavalry, which had five field officers and only three horses.

' The Elector's Ministers are so much sold to the States, that in his own private Chancery he could not get during six weeks a paper copied which he was to sign. The States, in the mean time, were informed of its contents and came forward with an impeachment against the Ministers, who had framed it, for high treason. The Elector, whom he describes as timid, being imformed that they were arrived in procession to present the address containing this impeachment, rode out by Rumford's advice a hunting to gain a day. Rumford immediately went into the Chancery, and threatened the Secretary, that if this paper were not copied and on the Elector's table ready for his signature by eight o'clock next morning, he should lose his place. The Secretary represented the impossibility, for it was not yet begun. Rumford ordered in the clerks, and caused it to be distributed among the number necessary, and then reiterated his threat with the addition, that if it were not ready at eight he should be no more Secretary at nine. To the Elector's surprise this paper, which, addressed

to the States, demonstrated the nullity of the claims they made, and pointed out their various and manifest usurpations, was ready at the hour, and was immediately signed and transmitted; so that their impeachment (calculated to prevent the blow, seeing that the Elector could not sign and transmit the work of one accused as a traitor) lost its object. Next day, by Rumford's advice, the Elector, as Vicar of the Empire, ennobled the Minister, who was of plebeian extraction, for his important services rendered to the public.

'*January 4th*, 1798.—This morning I go to Court, and afterwards dine at the Count de Gortz's, Minister of Saxony. Then go to see Count Rumford, who reads to me the result of some calculations he has been making this day. The Elector confirmed what he had told me, respecting the expense of the English garden. From what a servant says to him in delivering a message, I find that he has given orders to prepare for our reception in the work-house tomorrow.—Monsieur de Wernick calls on me in the evening, and we read together part of a printed account made by Rumford of his four years' administration of the army. Notwithstanding this account, which is perfectly clear and correct, certified after full examination by the Council to whom it was submitted for that purpose, his enemies circulate busily the whisper of mal-administration.

'*January 5th.*—This morning, at half an hour after nine, Count Rumford calls and we go out together. We arrive at the work-house and see the kitchen, which is wonderful. In general, the regularity, cleanliness, and economy of this house surpass anything I ever saw. The poor, who are maintained here, are employed busily, and have cheerful countenances. These people earn their living, and they are happy. Long may he be happy, who has made them so. I taste the soup given to the poor. It is very good; and I see the crowd sit down to eat it with good appetites. The portion of bread, he tells me, is generally taken home by them for their supper. There are about one thousand people fed here, at the annual

expense of about four hundred guineas, including everything. The contrivances to save cloth, linen, leather, &c. in making clothes, the arrangements to prevent fraud, and to keep the accounts for the regiments, are all admirable. We go from hence to a hospital for old poor people, from whence there is a fine view of the town. The chambers here are so warm that I cannot stand them. We then go round another part of the town, pass through a corner of the English garden, and come to the magazine and arsenal. We then go to the cannon foundery, which is also a very fine establishment. The boring is performed as at Woolwich. He has invented cannon, which are directed by means of a screw at the breech, and which have lateral lines of direction. He tells me that on experiment it is found, that two bullets go much straighter than one, and the reason he gives for it seems good, namely, that the hinder one pressing forward wedges the other a little, so that neither can rebound from side to side with a zigzag in the bore, the effect of which must be to throw it out of the line of direction, and this must be the case with a single ball, as it cannot exactly fit the bore.

'*January 6th.*—Dress and go to Court, where I dine. Mention to the Elector, who converses with me on my yesterday's excursion, that his Highness ought to have consigned to some record the state in which he found this country, lest posterity should, on seeing the improvements, doubt the situation in which he found it. This is like flattery, but, in the first place, it is founded in fact. Secondly, it is no small instance of benevolence, to have labored for the amelioration of a country, for a successor whom he dislikes. Neither of these, however, though they justify, would have induced this observation. I meant to encourage him in the pursuit of laudable objects, and, if anything I can say should have a tendency to produce that effect, it is well said. At dinner I sit next to the Electress, who has a clear, ready comprehension, and a good share of genius. She is not happy, and is well content that her dissatisfaction should be known. After dinner, the Elec-

tor inquires about Lafayette, and I set his character in what I think the fair light.

'Go from Court to see Count Rumford, and sit with him a good while. He reads to me his day's labor, in which he has reasoned himself into a belief that the life is, as Moses says, in the blood, and that it consists, which Moses does not say, in the operation of heat and cold, and in the movement, which, as a fluid, must be produced in it by the distribution and succession of those accidents. My solution of all such abstruse questions is, that things are so or so, because God pleases that they shall be so.'

The remainder of the winter and spring Mr Morris passed at Ratisbon, Studgard, and Francfort, but chiefly in this last city. Here he was joined by his friend, M. Leray de Chaumont, with whom he returned to Altona in June.

This tour to the south of Germany, which had occupied nine months, seems to have been undertaken from the combined motives of business, instruction, and pleasure. As usual, he mingled much with society, and was everywhere alive to the scenes around him, and eager in the pursuit of his favorite study of men, as their passions are developed, and characters moulded, by the varied forms of social and political existence. In politics, as in everything else, he preferred experiment to theory; and the knowledge obtained by observation, though bought with trouble and sacrifice, he considered worth its cost. He was now again stationary at Altona.

The deep interest, which Mr Morris had taken in the condition of the Dutchess of Orleans and her family, during the first part of his residence in Paris, was not diminished as their misfortunes increased. The young Duke of Orleans, (the present King of the French,) driven by a decree of arrestation from his command in the army, and from his country, had taken refuge in Switzerland. Here he had been for several months concealed from the world, even from the knowledge of his own family, till circumstances induced him to change his place of residence, with the view of seeking an asylum in the

United States. Among others, whom the horrors of the revolution had compelled to fly from their country, and who had sought a retreat in Switzerland, was the Countess de Flahaut, often noticed heretofore in the selections from Mr Morris's Diary, and one of his earliest friends in Paris. Her husband had died in the early stages of the revolution, and she had fled first to England, and then to Switzerland. In the little town of Bremgarten, near Zurich, she met the Duke of Orleans, and was the first to inform Mr Morris of his situation, in the following letter received by him at Hamburg.

THE COUNTESS DE FLAHAUT TO MR MORRIS.

'Bremgarten, Switzerland, January 27th 1795.

'Sir,

'I have seen in Switzerland the young Duke of Orleans. He has had a serious quarrel with Madame de Sillery, from whom he has received very bad treatment. But say nothing of this, for if she knew he divulged it, she would persecute him even in his concealment. He is now entirely estranged from her and her principles, and has even taken his sister from her charge, and put her under the care of the Princess de Conti, his aunt.

'Since he left the army his conduct in regard to his mother has been perfect. When he arrived with Dumouriez at the Austrian army, the Archduke and the Prince of Coburg proposed to him to enter into the service of the Emperor, retaining his rank and appointments of lieutenant general. He refused, although without money, and without knowing what would become of himself, telling them that he was unwilling to expose his mother and brothers, and that he could not serve against his country. He immediately departed, in company with an aid-de-camp, and travelled through Germany in a miserable little cabriolet. Being persecuted in Switzerland by the extreme partisans both of Aristocracy and of Jacobinism, he separated from his aid-de-camp, and, with a single servant, who followed him from the time of his emigration, (the

same who courageously gave his horse to Dumouriez) he wandered on foot among the mountains, spending no more than thirty sous a day for the food, lodging, and other necessaries required by them both.

'At length, not having more than thirty francs in the world, he returned to M. de Montesquiou,* who afforded him relief, and found a place for him as a professor in a college, where he taught geometry in the German language, without its ever being known, either to the masters or scholars, who he was. So much was he beloved in this situation, that M. de Salis, (a violent Aristocrat, of great influence in Switzerland, and who would have driven him away if he had known him,) was struck with the deportment of the young professor, and offered him the place of preceptor to his children. When I spoke to him of this retreat, he said to me, that he would willingly die for his mother and brothers, and he believed the more he kept himself concealed, the greater would be the chance of their safety. I am well persuaded, if he had pursued any other conduct, the horrible Robespierre would have massacred them all. In his manner of dress, he adopts the habit of his ancestor, Henry the Fourth. He is melancholy, but gentle and unassuming, and his whole ambition is to go to your America, there to forget the grandeur and the sufferings of his youth. But he has nothing in the world. Can you not render him the double service of acquainting his mother with his conduct, his veneratiou for her, and his hatred of Madame de Sillery, who ruined his father, (*qui a perdu son père;*) and also of informing him whether his mother has the means of subsistence, where are his brothers, and any little details respecting the situation of them all? He remembers having

* The Marquis de Montesquiou was put under a decree of accusation by the Convention, in November, 1792, while he was commanding the army of the Alps. He found an asylum in Switzerland, and resided at Bremgarten, under the name of the Chevalier de Rionel.

seen you, and says he was then so completely under the control of the false principles and prejudices of his governess, that you could not judge of him, but that he hopes so excellent a friend of his mother will not refuse to be his. Do you know that Madame de Sillery is at Hamburg, with M. de Valence and her niece? Adieu.

'THE COUNTESS DE FLAHAUT.'*

Mr Morris's reply to this letter has not been found, but it would seem, that he approved the plan of the Duke of Orleans for going to America, and offered him such assistance as he might require. At the same time, he sent to the Countess de Flahaut a draft on a banker in Basle, for one hundred louis d'ors, to defray the expenses of their journey to Hamburg. The person, whom she designates as *her cousin* in the following letter, is the Duke of Orleans.

---

* It may here be stated, that in none of this correspondence are the signatures of the writers attached to the letters, and frequently the name of the place is not mentioned. This caution was practised to guard against the risk of the letters being read by other persons, and the names of the parties being thus detected. The post offices at that time had a treacherous practice of opening letters for political objects. A very large portion of the letters received by Mr Morris, while in Europe, from his constant correspondents, are without signatures. These, together with the dates and names of places, are always supplied by him on the envelope of each letter.

The Countess de Flahaut was the authoress of the celebrated novels under that name in the French language. Her pen was thus employed in Switzerland, and, in one of her letters to Mr Morris, she speaks of a new *Roman*, from the sale of which she expected to recruit her exhausted funds. She afterwards married J. M. de Souza-Botelho, who was for some time the Portuguese Ambassador at the Court of Prussia, and afterwards in France. He is the same M. de Souza, by whose munificence, and under whose superintendence, was published the splendid Paris edition of the LUSIAD of Camoens, the *chef d'œuvre* of modern typography.

THE COUNTESS DE FLAHAUT TO MR MORRIS.

'Bremgarten, February 24th, 1795.

'Sir,

'A thousand thanks for your kind and consoling letter of the sixth instant. I shall depart as soon as possible. Think not that it will be with the delay, that I should return to Paris. I have only happiness now in prospect, and no guillotine to fear. *My cousin* will go with me; but it is necessary, that you should know his situation. Hamburg is full of people, to whom he is known, and whom he would wish never again to see. In the first place, Madame de Sillery is at Altona, and out of respect to his mother he desires to avoid her. Moreover, he cares not to embroil himself with so mischievous a person, for a writer like her is always to be dreaded. Her books are full of cruel detractions against all the persons, to whom she is under the highest obligations. Again, there is General Valence three leagues from Hamburg, with a niece of Madame de Sillery. And then a certain M. Rivry, aid-de-camp of M. de Valence, is at Hamburg. Independently of the regards, which *my cousin* entertains for his family, he has personal reasons for desiring never to meet any one of these people.

'You see, therefore, my friend, it will be necessary for him to have a little retreat quite secluded. And as for me, the smallest lodge, far away from the town, will be most agreeable, for I have absolute need of air, and my strength will not allow me to go far to seek it. Besides, the more I shall be retired, the more incognito will *my cousin* remain. But above all things shun Altona.

'I must also give you some account of the pecuniary situation of *my cousin*. His father had many transactions with Walekiers, and he is the only agent, who has treated him with fidelity. All the others plundered and deceived him. There are even now in England two deposits amounting to thirty-five thousand pounds sterling, of which no account can be ob-

tained. He intends to prosecute the affair; and there are many other particulars respecting these plunderers, of which I am not permitted to write. Walekiers alone has been perfectly generous and disinterested. So far from being indebted to his father, he is his creditor; and yet, he now sends him a remittance of twenty-five louis a month, to be returned when he shall again come into possession of his property. After this, you will see, that it is impossible to keep Walekiers ignorant either of his retreat, or his journey. But, he is the only person, who will be informed of them. Hence you can converse with him or not on the subject, as you may think proper. He desires not to lodge with Walekiers, on account of the company he would meet there, although Walekiers has made him every possible offer to receive him at his house. But he wishes to associate with a man of reputation, like you, the friend of his mother. You will understand all this better, when we shall have an opportunity to converse.

'It will be fifteen days before I shall be able to commence the journey. In that time I must send your bill of exchange to be negotiated at Basle, for such a thing cannot be done in this small village. A carriage is also to be repaired for *my cousin*, but that will not take long, as it is almost new. We shall then set off, I and my English servant woman, and he and the faithful servant, of whom I have spoken. Adieu, my excellent friend; I cannot find words to express how sensible I am of your goodness.

'The Countess de Flahaut.'

'P. S. The twenty-five louis a month from Walekiers have only commenced since his arrival in Hamburg, that is to say, within a month, and may be stopped at any moment, since they depend on the fortune and the will of M. Walekiers.—The enclosed letter is from *my cousin*.'

THE DUKE OF ORLEANS TO MR MORRIS.

'Bremgarten, February 24th, 1795.

'Sir,

'I accept with much pleasure the offers you make me. Your kindness is a blessing I owe to my mother, and to our friend. I am sure, that my excellent mother will be somewhat consoled, and more tranquil, to know that I am near you, in your happy country. I am very ready to labor to acquire independence. Hardly had I entered upon life, when the greatest misfortunes assailed me, but, thanks to God, they did not overwhelm me,—too happy in my reverses, that my youth had not given me time to become too much attached to my station, or to contract habits difficult to be broken, and that I was deprived of my fortune before I could either use or abuse it.

'Your excellent friend has the goodness to undertake to send you many particulars respecting my present condition, which are tedious enough, but of which you ought to be informed. I hope, Sir, my confidence will afford you another proof of all those sentiments of esteem and friendship, which you inspire in me.

L. P. D'ORLEANS.

In compliance with the request of Madame de Flahaut, in her letter of the twenty-seventh of January, Mr Morris wrote to the Dutchess of Orleans, informing her of the situation of her son, and of his intended departure for America. He received from the Dutchess the following answer.

'Your letter has caused me a happiness, which I cannot express. Ah! if seas must separate me from one so dear, what an alleviation, what peace, will my perfect confidence in your friendship and interest secure to me! I need not speak to you of my gratitude; it was before established; but judge to what degree it filled my afflicted breast, upon the reception of your touching and amiable letter.

'Indeed, I was very sure that he, who, alas! is deprived of every support, which nature gave him, would find in you a true and useful friend. I pray you to continue to him your interest and your counsels. I hope you will always be able to tell me, that he has conducted himself well, and that you are satisfied with him. I shall then be certain, that this young man, so interesting to me, so dear to my heart, ever does what is best.

'It will afford me a solace necessary to my existence, and it will be sweet to contract such great obligations to one, whom I esteem so much, and whose friendship I return with my whole heart.'

Meantime the wanderers at Bremgarten commenced their journey, about the tenth of March, and travelled slowly through Germany towards Hamburgh. Madame de Flahaut's health was so delicate, that she could not endure the fatigue of rapid motion. When they arrived at Brunswick, it was reported, that the road between that place and Hamburg was thronged with emigrants, some of whom would unquestionably recognise the Duke of Orleans, should he encounter them on the way. To guard against such an accident, it was thought best for him to perform the route as speedily as possible, and without stopping. This was too great an effort for his fair companion, and she was left behind at Brunswick. The Duke, and his friend, M. de Montjoye, who accompanied him in his succeeding travels, reached Hamburg undiscovered. Madame de Flahaut arrived and joined them shortly afterwards.

The next step was to procure a place of retreat. This was first effected at Nieuenstadt, in the neighborhood of the city. If we may judge from a note of the Countess de Flahaut to Mr Morris, they found themselves but indifferently accommodated in this retirement.

'There is no such thing, my dear friend, as arranging matters in this house. Yesterday evening we asked for supper, and the man said he would not furnish it under double

the price already agreed upon Besides, he answered *my cousin* rudely, and had the malice to tell the woman of the house, that we did not intend to remain with her, when no such hint had been given to anybody. In short, he has been guilty of such language and conduct, that *my cousin* told him we had no more need of him. For Heaven's sake send us something to eat, or we shall perish by a famine. I beseech you to come and see us, for never were prisoners in a dungeon more desolate than we are. To make an end of us, *my cousin* had a violent fever yesterday, and as for me, I am freezing to death.'

Such an appeal as this, of course, was not neglected, and accommodations more befitting were sought out. But the Duke's project of a voyage to America was changed, soon after his arrival in Hamburg, probably because Mr Morris had resolved to remain longer in Europe, as the first idea was to make the voyage with him. A new scheme, of a temporary nature, was substituted in its place. To hide himself from the world, the Duke determined to pass the summer in travelling to the north of Europe. He left Hamburg for Denmark early in the spring, and as soon as he had crossed the Sound, he wrote to Mr Morris.

'Gottenburg, May 15th, 1795.

'Sir,

'You see by the place where I date my letter, that I have not resisted the temptation of visiting Sweden. It was not easy to pass so near this kingdom, without making the tour of it, and I do not repent doing so, for in a commercial view, this city merits the attention of a traveller.

'I felt much joy on my arrival, in finding a little billet from my mother, which she sent me through the channel of a French Priest, a refugee in Switzerland, whom I believe I have mentioned to you. By the same opportunity she wrote a charming letter to my sister, of which I received a copy. This Abbé sent me word, at the same time, that my mother is very much better, and that her health improves daily. I have heard from

my little sister, who is also much better. Pardon, I pray you, these details. I give them to you, only because I know the strong interest you take in everything, that relates to my honored mother. Believe me, Sir, it is impossible to feel more deeply than I do, the lively concern which you are so kind as to take in my fate; and, I pray you, receive my assurances of the very ardent and sincere affection, with which you inspire me.

'L. P. D'ORLEANS.'

From Gottenburg he pursued his course through Norway and Lapland to the North Cape, travelling much of the way through those wild and unfrequented regions on foot. He returned by way of Tornea, the gulf of Bothnia, and Stockholm. Mr Morris next heard from him at Lubec, whence he wrote on the 2d of January. 'I have returned from my travels,' said he, 'in perfect safety. They were rather longer than I at first expected, but then I have been to the North Cape, and should have gone farther, had such a thing been possible.' The Duke took up his residence at Frederickstadt, in Holstein, where he remained seven or eight months. Meantime his northern rambles had exhausted his funds, and left him destitute and in debt. When this was made known to Mr Morris, he placed a credit for him of fifteen hundred pounds in London. For this seasonable relief the Duke returned his grateful acknowledgements. His scheme of an American tour was at length revived.

'Frederickstadt, August 30th, 1796.

'Sir,

'I have just received a letter from my mother, which orders me to undertake a voyage to your country, and announces to me, that this voyage will *ameliorate her situation and that of my connexions*. I shall therefore depart with all haste. My brothers, too, will sail for Philadelphia. This is certain, for the Directory sent me officially my mother's letter, and of course had knowledge of it.

'I have already informed you, that I wrote to Mr Parish to ask him to give my sister a letter of credit for three hundred pounds, out of the fifteen hundred. He sent me word that the sum, which he then had at my disposal was only four hundred pounds, that he could not deliver it in small sums, nor without my receipt. Consequently I sent him my receipt for four hundred pounds. I have transmitted one hundred to my sister, and kept three hundred for myself. I shall set off immediately for Hamburg, where I shall embark in the first vessel. Adieu. I have little time, and embrace you in great haste.

'L. P. D'ORLEANS.'

Mr Morris was now on his travels in Germany, but as soon as he received this intelligence of the Duke's intended departure for America, he wrote to his correspondents in New York, giving him an unlimited credit during his wanderings in the United States. The Duke de Montpensier, and the Count de Beaujolais, arrived in America from Marseilles, and joined their brother.

THE DUKE OF ORLEANS TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

New York, November 21st, 1796.

'Sir

'I once more answer your letter of May 11th, fearing that my former communications have not reached you. As I receive no letters from Hamburg, I have reason to think this will have the same fate. For the rest, I cannot say enough to you of the obliging reception we have met with from your friends.

'We owe you many thanks, and we return them to you most cordially, for the credit you have been pleased to give us here. You are undoubtedly informed, that we have availed ourselves of it for the sum of three thousand dollars, which, added to one of a thousand dollars, taken up at the time I received

your letter, amounts to four thousand dollars, for which we are indebted to your kindness.

'I can no longer congratulate you, as I did a short time since, on the good news we received. It has all passed away like a dream. In the midst of this general calamity, we have at least the consolation, the satisfaction, of knowing, that our beloved mother is away from that wretched country, and safe from all danger. This alone is a full compensation for all the rest. She will certainly feel deeply your conduct towards us, and will doubtless do all that is requisite to discharge our debt to you. Adieu. Ever yours,

'L. P. D'ORLEANS.'

The three brothers continued in America, travelling in different parts of the United States, and in the West Indies, till after the return of Mr Morris from Europe. He received them several times in his own house at Morrisania. When they arrived in England, the Duke of Orleans wrote to him, and the correspondence was continued for a time, though it seems to have been dropped in the latter years of Mr Morris's life. After the restoration, however, he wrote a congratulatory letter to the Dutchess on that event.*

---

*The above mentioned loans of money to the Duke of Orleans remained unpaid for a long time, but were at length fully reimbursed, with interest, in two separate payments; the first, of about thirty-two thousand francs, in 1816; and the remainder, of thirty-eight thousand francs, after Mr Morris's death, in 1818. The whole amount of principal and interest, which was paid by the Duke of Orleans, was somewhat more than thirteen thousand dollars.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR MORRIS'S VOYAGE TO AMERICA.—ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK.—HE RETIRES TO MORRISANIA.—CHOSEN TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.—ENGAGED IN A CAUSE AT THE BAR WITH HAMILTON.—PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.—PART TAKEN BY HIM AS A SENATOR.—HIS TOUR TO CANADA.—HIS POLITICAL OPINIONS.—ORATIONS AND POLITICAL WRITINGS.—GENERAL MOREAU.—MADAME DE STAEL'S PROPOSED VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES.

HAVING brought his complicated affairs to a close in Europe, Mr Morris began seriously to think of revisiting his native country. Amidst the infinitude of relations he had contracted, both of friendship and business, it was no easy matter to arrange them all, and to sever attachments, which time and intimacy had cemented, but which were never again to be renewed. By degrees, however, this was accomplished, and he sailed from Hamburg for New York, on the fourth of October, 1798. A more tedious, protracted, disagreeable, and comfortless passage, it has seldom been the lot of luckless voyager to endure. When they had been fifty-seven days at sea, the captain held a council with the mate, into which he asked Mr Morris, to consult on the state of affairs, and determine what was to be done. It was agreed, from a series of probabilities, that the actual position of the ship was somewhere near the east end of Long Island, but the provisions of the crew had run short, and the weather was precarious. A stiff northwester would drive them off to the West Indies, and in such a catastrophe, they would all be in danger of perishing for want of food. The question for the council to decide was, whether they should steer directly for New York, or make the nearest port in Rhode Island. Like men of prudence, they gave a unanimous voice for the latter, and in two days they were safely moored in the harbor of Newport.

But here a new set of calamities sprang up. A drunken pilot was to be dealt with; the captain grew impertinent, surly, and obstinate; snow storms and gales of wind troubled the air and the sea; and ten dismal days and nights were consumed in vain attempts to escape from the smooth waters of Narraganset Bay, and get fairly upon the ocean again. At length a packet came along, bound to New York. Mr Morris resolved at least to have the satisfaction of exchanging one floating prison for another, and went from the ship to the packet. Here matters were little mended, except that the captain was in better humor. A stormy day and a dreary night were spent in beating around Point Judith, with eminent peril of shipwreck. They were next tossed to and fro in the Sound, obliged to put into New London one night, and anchor under the lee shore of Long Island another. At last, twenty-three days from the time he first saw the coast of Rhode Island, he arrived in New York, making a voyage of eighty days from Hamburg; a commentary worth preserving on the present splendid establishments of packets and steamboats, in the great commercial centre of the New World.

It was with no light emotions of joy, that he received the cordial greetings of his friends, who flocked around him as soon as his arrival was known. Just ten years had elapsed, since he sailed from the Capes of Delaware, and it was now gratifying to discover, that time and distance, those potent aids to forgetfulness and insensibility, had not weakened the ties of old attachments, nor dissolved the charm of early friendships. 'It seems,' said he, 'as if I were not an unwelcome guest in my native country.' The gratulations and hospitality of friends detained him some days in the city, and then he went to Morrisania, and took up his residence on his own domains.

To this stage of his existence he had long been looking forward with pleasing anticipations, and had resolved to pass the remainder of his days in tranquil retirement, on the spot consecrated by the tombs of his ancestors, and the endearing associations of childhood. The first object of his care was to put his

estate in order, which had been little improved by ten years of imperfect culture. He next set himself about a more formidable undertaking. The old house, venerable as it was in its age, and attractive from the reminiscences it revived, was nevertheless 'leaky and looked ruinous.' In short, it held out few promises of contented enjoyment to a man, whose habits had taught him to value the elegances, as well as the more substantial comforts of life. He determined to erect a new one. Nature had fully accomplished her part, in affording him one of the finest sites in the world, embracing a beautiful variety of grounds, a prospect of intermingled islands and waters, and in the distance the broad expanse of Long Island Sound. The plan of his house conformed to a French model, and, though spacious and well contrived, was suited rather for convenience and perhaps splendor within, than for a show of architectural magnificence without. Finished, however, according to his taste, it answered the ends of its design, being the home of his after life, the scene of a generous hospitality, and of the full measure of happiness, which fancy and hope had pictured to him in the vista of coming years.

These affairs of building and improvements afforded him a busy occupation. In the mean time another sphere of action was prepared for him. He was chosen by the legislature of New York to supply a vacancy in the Senate of the United States. He accepted the appointment upon the principle, that it was every man's duty to conform to the wishes of his fellow citizens, who should select him unsolicited to fill a responsible and important office. As soon as he arrived from abroad, his friends beset him on this point, but he took care 'to let them know early his intention to lead a private life, not meaning to embark again on the stormy ocean of politics.' Such resolutions have been often formed, and as often broken. Mr Morris writes in his Diary, that Lafayette deceived himself, when at the height of power in Paris he said he was weary of public life, and meant to retire. If we may judge from all examples, perhaps from human nature, every man who talks thus, deceives

himself. Who retires from a political career, till his race is run; till he is at the top of ambition's rickety ladder, or till despair whispers the unwelcome truth, that he can mount no higher? Who refuses an office, that carries with it power, consequence, or emolument? Nay, who can be expected to refuse such an office? Who ought to refuse it? Offices must be held by somebody. When we hear men talk of shunning office, of retiring from high public stations, of rejecting splendid offers in prospect, and of despising power and influence, we may lay it down as a general rule, that such men deceive themselves.

Before Mr Morris took his seat in the Senate, he was engaged as counsel in a remarkable law case, which was argued at Albany. A few brief hints in the Diary afford nearly all the information that I have been able to procure, except the report contained in the first volume of Johnson's Cases, and which touches only on the matter of law.

'*Albany, February 6th*, 1800.—Go to the Court of Errors. Hamilton concludes forcibly. Harrison opens the law, and so does Burr. On our side Troup makes a short good speech.

'*February 8th.*—In the Court of Appeals Mr R. Livingston speaks on our side. I follow him.

'*February 10th.*—Finish my argument, which has, I observe, produced considerable effect.

'*February 11th.*—Attend the Court of Errors, and hear the arguments of the adversary. Hamilton is desirous of being witty, but goes beyond the bounds, and is open to a severe dressing.

'*February 12th.*—The adverse counsel conclude. Colonel Burr is very able, and has I see made considerable impression. I had an opportunity to retort on Hamilton, which I did not use, and am on the whole well pleased that I did not.'

This cause attracted notoriety at the time, from the brilliant constellation of talents comprised in the counsel on both sides. As the arguments were not reported, nothing now remains to give any idea of the display of those talents. There is a venerable and imposing tradition, both in Albany and New York,

that talks loudly, but vaguely, on the subject, and which, like the responses of the Delphian prophetess, leaves you to gather a meaning of high import and wide interpretation. It seems well established, however, that uncommon power of reasoning was elicited, and that the rencounter of wits, particularly between Hamilton and Morris, was sustained with an agility and keenness, highly edifying to the audience. These freedoms are said to have run to a latitude, which was too great even for the indulgence of friendship, and which caused a temporary coldness. If so, it was short, and soon forgotten. The part acted by Morris in this cause gained him much credit, especially on account of the talent and adroitness he discovered, in a set contest with the giants of the day, after having been so long unused to the habits of the bar and forensic debate.

He joined the Senate in Philadelphia on the second of May, but they adjourned a fortnight afterwards, to re-assemble the next session at Washington. The interval was chiefly occupied by Mr Morris in a tour to Canada and Niagara, of which he has given a lively and minute description in a long letter to Mr Parish. One object of his journey was to explore a large tract of new lands, which he possessed on the southern borders of the St Lawrence and Lake Ontario. In November he proceeded to Washington, and was present at the opening of the Senate.

Being now fairly seated in the National Legislature, he must of necessity range himself in the ranks of one of the two great parties, into which the political forces of the nation were at that time divided. From the first origin of these parties he had been absent from the country, and of course had no personal entanglements with either. Considering the tenor of his sentiments, however, we should expect to find him, where he actually appeared, under the banners of the *Federalists*. There he took a stand, and there he maintained it to the end of his life; sometimes, perhaps, with a zeal that outstripped prudence, but always with an honesty of purpose, a fearlessness of responsibility, and an ingenuous hearty good will, that com-

manded the respect of his opponents, and deserved from friends and foes the praise of high minded patriotism.

As soon as Congress assembled in Washington, the ruling topic that absorbed all minds was the approaching presidential election. The two rival candidates, Jefferson and Burr, being both democrats, the federalists were reduced to a perplexing dilemma, and compelled to resort to what they considered a choice of two evils. The results are well known. As the election devolved on the House of Representatives, without the intervention of the Senate, Mr Morris kept aloof from the strife as much as possible, and only expressed his opinion when it was desired. He differed from his party, however, on this point, and approved the choice of Mr Jefferson. Writing to Hamilton, some time before the election, he observes, 'the object with many is to take Mr Burr, and I should not be surprised if that measure were adopted. Not meaning to enter into intrigues, I have merely expressed the opinion, that since it was evidently the intention of our fellow citizens to make Mr Jefferson their President, it seems proper to fulfil that intention.' He then speaks in the following honorable and patriotic language. 'Having declared my determination to support the constitutionally appointed administration, so long as its acts shall not in my judgment be essentially wrong, my personal line of conduct gives me no difficulty, but I am not without serious apprehensions for the future state of things.' Personally he was well disposed to both candidates, and the reason of his preference sprang from a disinterested motive, that could have no aim but the public good. His sentiments are explained in his letters to Hamilton. After the election he was on friendly terms with Mr Jefferson, though opposed to him *toto cælo* in all measures of politics.

During the three years of Mr Morris's service in the Senate of the United States, he was a strong pillar in the federal party, thoroughly imbued with their policy and principles, and generally uniting in their acts. The occasions on which he made conspicuous efforts, were in the debates on the repeal

of the internal taxes, on the judiciary establishment, and on Ross's resolutions for taking possession of New Orleans.

He was opposed to the discontinuance of internal, or direct taxes, and he argued with his usual ingenuity to prove this mode of raising a revenue preferable to that of duties on importations. They are collected at less expense, and are less onerous on the people, by saving the expenditures incident to levying duties, before the articles reach the consumer; they prevent the crime of smuggling; and, in short, they are the means of diffusing money widely throughout the country, instead of its being confined in the hands of merchants and dealers in commodities. Money will go to the place of demand, and where it is wanted for taxes, there it will be found, and in the progress of circulation will be converted to its beneficial uses. He did not disapprove duties on imports; he would have them laid with discrimination, but he would collect the greater portion of the revenue through the medium of internal taxes, and by no means abandon a system of such essential importance to the welfare of the country.

Just before the close of Mr Adams's administration, it is known that a law was passed by Congress, making changes in the judiciary establishment, increasing the number of Circuit Courts, and adding new judges. These judges were nominated by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and commissioned. They accordingly entered upon their duties. At the next session of Congress, under the succeeding administration, a bill was brought forward to repeal this act, suspend the new judges, and restore things again to their old footing. Wearing the aspect of a party measure, it was debated with great warmth by the democrats in favor of the repeal, and by the federalists in solid phalanx on the other side.

Mr Morris made two speeches on this occasion, which may perhaps be considered the most favorable specimens of his senatorial eloquence. Whether from the excitement of party, or from whatever cause, he had wrought himself up to the conviction, that the subject involved principles of infinite

moment to the future existence of the government. He saw in the repeal of this act a precedent, which would be a sanction to any encroachment upon the constitutional charter, or any 'excess of capricious legislation.' The advocates of the repeal argued that the act was unnecessary, that no additional judges were wanted, and that the expense was a waste of the public treasure. These points, touching the merits and expediency of the bill, he combated in detail. But the weight of his argument was mainly directed to the constitutional bearing of the question. He insisted, that the judges were appointed during good behavior, and entered upon their office in that belief, that Congress had no power to suspend them, except by impeachment for misdemeanor, that a law of abrogation, or expulsion, would be essentially an *ex post facto* law, a violent and unqualified breach of the Constitution. Such were his views, and he enforced them by a rare felicity of illustration, and cogency of reasoning. The repeal passed, nevertheless, and he was accustomed to mourn, as long as he lived, over the deadly wound, which the Constitution had received by this rash tampering with the judiciary.

In the affair of Spanish aggressions, and the proposed seizure of New Orleans, he went the full length of Mr Ross's resolutions. His speech is elaborate, copious in matter, and pointed in style. Spain had committed outrages hostile to our national honor and interests; justice demanded a reprisal; negotiation was hopeless; nothing remained but force; nature had made the Mississippi an appendage to the United States, and it must one day belong to them; now was the time to secure the possession; it was justified by the principles of right, urged by sound policy, and commanded by national self-respect.

Such being Mr Morris's doctrines, it is not wonderful, perhaps, that he should approve the Louisiana treaty, although generally condemned, by the opponents to the administration, as a democratic measure, set on foot to answer party views, and portending ruinous consequences to the country. Mr Morris saw it in another light. He regarded the ceded ter-

ritory as of vast importance to the United States, and believed it could never be obtained on better or more honorable terms. From the first promulgation of the treaty, therefore, he gave it the hearty support of his approbation and counsels.

The term for which he had been chosen, as a Senator from New York, expired on the 4th of March, 1803. A change of parties in the legislature prevented his being re-elected. This was the last scene of his political life. The remainder of his days were passed at Morrisania, in that retirement, which fancy had delineated in such captivating colors, and for which he had made substantial and tempting preparations. An ample fortune, numerous friends, a charming retreat, and a tranquil home, were the elements of his happiness, and filled up the measure of his hopes.

A large part of the year 1803 was occupied in travelling. In July he made a jaunt through the New England States. Early in August he commenced a northern tour, on a visit to his wild lands, and to Canada, from which he did not return till the middle of November. The following is a description of his passing the rapids of the St Lawrence on this tour.

'*October* 21*st*.—We are off early, and soon after are enveloped in a thick fog, so that we cannot see ten paces from the boat. In this condition we descend the Rapid, called the *Coleau du Lac*. This is not pleasant, nor quite safe. We learn by the sound when we have passed it, and then feel our way towards the village of the Cedars. Before we reach it, we must go out to avoid a rocky point, which is shoal for a considerable distance, with a stream rapid enough to bilge us, should we strike the rocks; and if we do not, immediately on passing it, pull to the shore, we shall be sucked into the Rapid of the Cedars, which is difficult with the clearest light, and, of course, dangerous in the dark. We are so fortunate as to reach the village without accident; and, having staid there till the fog clears away, take a pilot, for we are told that the river is so low, that the most experienced navigators get a pilot at this place. Ours conducts us well, and finds all his

skill necessary, for being obliged to shoot the *Cascades* to take in some of our boatmen, who had gone thither on foot, we not only ship some water, but get a tolerable thump on our stern. It is indeed a severe pitch. We now cross the lake St Clare and go to Cahnawaga to get an Indian pilot for the Lachine Rapid. The weather in this *trajét* is charming, and the view of the country very fine; but, as we proceed, a light easterly wind renders it raw and unpleasant. The weather also becomes cloudy, and our Indian pilot will not go to-night. He says the passage is dangerous, and stopped up by grounded rafts into the bargain, so we stand over to the village of Lachine.

'*October 22d.*—At half past nine set off for Montreal. The Lachine Rapid is the most difficult in the river, and the effects of the drought are far more sensible here than at the Cedars, because they have there only the water of the St Lawrence, which flowing from the lake Ontario rises and falls but little. Even now it is not diminished above three feet from its highest swell; but below the *Cascades*, the Ottawa or *Grande Rivière*, falls into the St Lawrence, and in medium seasons gives an equal, but in the freshes a greater supply of water, so that below its mouth the parameter of the river is equal to a column of water at least double that, which the St Lawrence alone usually supplies. At present the Ottawa gives hardly any. This Rapid then is scarcely passable. The pilot points out one rock never before seen above water, and now at least two feet above the surface. To mend the matter, a raft has grounded, and is wedged between two rocks in the only channel. We discover this untoward circumstance when we are so far advanced, that it is not possible to return, or materially to check our advance, which is at the rate of a tolerable gallop. Our pilot, though much alarmed, preserves some presence of mind, and does the best which the state of things will permit. He runs close to, and even grazes, the raft. Thus we take the swell, which is occasioned by the stoppage, and bound over the rock. To have struck in this place would have

cost us our baggage at least. Having thus leaped the barrier of Lachine, we glide on smoothly and shoot with ease the *Saut Normand*, and get fairly housed a little before noon at Dillon's hotel.'

From this date Mr Morris's retired habits of living afford but few materials for biography. Two or three months of each year he commonly devoted to travelling, either on short excursions of pleasure, or journeys to his new lands, in which he had a large property invested, and which accordingly required his attention. The rest of the time he passed at Morrisania, occupied in cultivating his farm, receiving the social visits of his friends and acquaintances, reading, and a wide correspondence on politics and business.

Although he had wholly given up public life, and, considering the tenor of his political views, he had no expectation of being brought forward again by the people, since there was little prospect of a change of parties, yet his mind was active, he was watchful of events, scanned public measures with acuteness, and took a lively concern in all that was passing. To Robert R. Livingston, soon after that gentleman's return from his mission to France, he wrote as follows.

'When you speak of my indifference, you do not sufficiently consider my situation. I never sought, avoided, or resigned an office, but continued at my last post to the latest moment; and was then replaced by a gentleman, who was, I presume, more worthy of the public confidence. It becomes me, in submission to the will of my fellow citizens, to doubt of my talents; for I cannot, neither can they, doubt my integrity. I am connected with the members of my party by their worth, and by their kindness. If I could for a moment suppose they harbored designs unfriendly to our country, that moment the connexion would be dissolved. But I have all the evidence, which the nature of the case admits, that their views are honorable, just, and patriotic. I believe this also of many among your party, and among your present adversaries. It is my wish, that every such man were numbered in our fold, that so

we might stand and fall together. I shall not, however, preach politics in the vain hope of making converts, for a mind cooled by the winters of half a century has no disposition to become a moral Quixote. It is my duty to accept with resignation what the will of God has offered, and this becomes less difficult, from a conviction, that few men or things are worth one anxious thought.'

Much might be said of Mr Morris's political opinions, of their nature, complexion, and tendency, particularly as developed during the last years of his life. But these are expressed with so much clearness and precision in his published letters, that a commentary of this sort is not required, and would be more tedious than edifying. If his opinions after the embargo, and through the war, were to have a name, they might perhaps come under the designation of *ultra-federalism.* It must however be kept in mind, that his political views were essentially his own, and that, although he chose to range himself in the line of the Federalists, he did not pretend to act with them in all respects as a party. On the contrary, he was opposed to some of their prominent measures. Hence it would be an error to confound any speculations, dogmas, or statements in his writings with federalism, as recognised by the party at that time ; or to consider the party responsible for them, as coming from a leader in their ranks. He carried into politics, as into everything else, his bold and independent turn of thinking, and on all subjects he was accustomed to express his opinions with prompt decision, a fearless freedom, and an indifference to public censure or applause. He was often consulted by members of Congress, on the important questions before that body, and his correspondence will show with what unreserve and fulness he uttered his sentiments and counsels.

He filled up some of his leisure hours in writing for the newspapers, generally on political topics, but sometimes on those of a critical or literary cast. Now and then he descended to satire and humor, both in prose and verse. The larger part of these effusions may be found in the *New York Even-*

ing Post, the *Examiner*, and the *United States Gazette*. Through these channels he presented to the world his opinions on passing events, and sent out the shafts of his eloquence, wit, and argument, against the policy and doings of the ruling party, the political doctrines of the Jeffersonian school, and the war administration of Mr Madison. Several of his essays in the Evening Post are signed AN AMERICAN, which, it will be recollected, was his early revolutionary signature.

At different times Mr Morris was called to address the public, by the desire of numbers of his fellow citizens. Not long after his return from Europe, he pronounced an *Oration on the Death of Washington*, at the request of the corporation of the city of New York. Again, it was his melancholy and painful task to address the concourse of assembled mourners, at the funeral of Hamilton, whose untimely death was deplored by a nation in tears, and which to him had caused the loss of a most intimate and valued friend. He also delivered an *Oration in Honor of the Memory of George Clinton*, a patriot of early times, and a name high on the list of the eminent founders of American freedom. These performances are marked by some of Mr Morris's striking attributes of conception and style, but they can hardly be numbered among the happiest specimens of his compositions. They abound in expressive imagery, are rich in the resources of fancy, and not destitute of his usual vigor of thought and pointed language; but his efforts to reach the heart, to move the feelings, are sometimes overstrained, and seldom successful. The tone of his eloquence, and his mental characteristics, seem to have been better suited to the bar, or the senate, than to a popular audience. The strength of his understanding, and the adroit use of his inventive powers, might carry conviction, where they would fail to kindle into life the gentler passions, and his imagination, ever brilliant and ever fertile, might adorn an argument, when it would labor without effect to touch the chords of sympathy. His oration, on the *Restoration of the Bourbons*, attracted much notice at the time, from the tenor of

its political sentiments. In its literary execution, it partakes of many of the excellences and some of the faults of the author's style. The thoughts are condensed, the language studied and terse, running a little too much into declamation and a measured rotundity of periods, but never feeble or diffuse. It was translated into French, and published in Paris.

The two discourses before the New York Historical Society, of which he was President, are worthy of his reputation, and favorable testimonials of his talents and of the variety and compass of his attainments. Among the valuable contributions of that society to the historical lore of the country, these discourses claim a conspicuous place, especially as containing the reflections of a statesman on the early and progressive fortunes of New York, and on the utility of history, as a field of study and a source of knowledge.

The following account of a conversation with General Moreau. at Morrisania, is curious, considering the subsequent fate of that distinguished and unfortunate officer.

'*November* 10*th*, 1807.—General Moreau comes to breakfast. Walk with him, and endeavor to dissuade him from his projected journey to New Orleans. He is at length shaken, and would renounce it, if his preparations were not too far advanced. I persist, and, at length, render it doubtful in his mind. I am certain this journey will be imputed by many evil meaning men to improper motives. He treats the chattering of idlers with contempt. But I tell him, that such idlers form a power in republics. That he must not suppose himself as free here, as he would be in an absolute monarchy; that his reputation makes him a slave to public opinion; that he cannot with impunity do many things here, which would be of no consequence in a country, where he was surrounded by spies in the service of government; because there, the Ministers having convinced themselves, that his views are innocent, and his conduct irreproachable, he might safely laugh at the suspicions both of the great vulgar and of the small; but here, where the same modes of knowing what men do are not

adopted, every one is at liberty to suspect, and will decide rashly on appearances, after which it may be impossible to deracinate the ideas hastily, lightly, and unjustly assumed.

'In the course of our conversation, touching very gently the idea of his serving (in case of necessity) against France, he declares frankly, that when the occasion arrives, he shall feel no reluctance; that, France having cast him out, he is a citizen of the country in which he lives, and has the same right to follow his trade here, as any other man. And as it would be unjust to prevent a French hatter, whom Bonaparte might banish, from making hats, so it would be unjust to prevent a French General from making war. I assent to the truth of this observation, not because I believe it true, but because I will not impeach the reasons he may find it convenient to give to himself for his own conduct, should he hereafter be employed in our service.'

After Mr Morris's return from Europe, he held frequent communications by letter with M. Necker, till the time of that eminent person's death, and to a much later period with his daughter, Madame de Staël. These related chiefly to matters of business, which were too intricate and extensive to admit of an exposition in this place. A few facts, however, are requisite to render some parts of Mr Morris's published correspondence intelligible.

In November, 1794, a transaction occurred at Copet, between M. Necker on the one part, and M. Leray de Chaumont and Mr Morris on the other, by which the former advanced about thirty-eight thousand dollars to the latter, receiving their bonds payable at long terms in the United States, and secured by lands in that country. This operation was entered into by M. Necker for the advantage of Madame de Staël, and was in due time accomplished according to the terms of the agreement. In the progress of this affair Madame Staël had become acquainted with the sales of new lands in the United States, and, forming a high opinion of their value, she prevailed on her father to appropriate twenty thousand dollars of the money

he had set apart for her, in the purchase and improvements of those lands. A negotiation to this effect had been arranged with M. Leray de Chaumont, and was to be closed immediately, when Madame de Staël received a letter from the Duke de Liancourt, then travelling in the United States, which contained representations that seemed to her discouraging. The day before the papers were to be signed, she wrote the following note to M. Leray de Chaumont, who was then at Copet.

'November 6th, 1796.

'Sir,

'I am afraid you will find me very troublesome, but as I regard you more in the light of a guide than of a contractor, and since it is owing much more to your personal character, than to all the calculations in the world, that I confide the fortune of my children to you, I do not hesitate to speak to you freely of my particular interests. I have seen a letter from the Duke de Liancourt, written in America, and another from a well informed American merchant, which unite in dissuading any one from going to America, or making purchases there. They are of a kind to frighten the Swiss from these speculations. The writers do not say, that they know where the lands of A. are situated. They add, moreover, that Mr T.'s lands sell for two piasters an acre. Are these lands near yours? I pray you to solve the difficulties, with which I am embarrassed, and the more, as this affair of four thousand acres is a signal act of kindness on the part of my father. It is of real value only as it regards my children, and, in the mean time, it is depriving my father of a part of his revenue. These motives, which your delicacy will perfectly comprehend, urge me to request that my doubts may be removed, before the conclusion of any definite agreement. A thousand kind compliments.

'Necker de Stael.'

To this note M. Leray replied, that the information she had received did not alter his good opinion of the proposed bar-

gain, nor of the benefits she would derive from it; but if she was thus fearful and hesitating at the outset, she might easily imagine the anxieties to which she would probably be exposed during a lapse of years, while the affair was in operation, and that he did not wish to insist on her completing the contract. M. Necker waited on him, however, the next day, and apologized in the name of his daughter for her hesitancy and apprehensions, at so late a stage of the business, and the agreement was immediately concluded.

This was the beginning of an interest invested by Madame de Staël in the lands of the United States, which continued under various forms till the end of her life. The lands selected in fulfilment of the above contract were situated in the northeastern part of Pennsylvania, and were unluckily comprised in the tract, which was involved in the controversy between that State and Connecticut. This rendered the title precarious, and M. Leray made other arrangements in regard to the contract, satisfactory to M. Necker and his daughter. Meantime Madame de Staël effected another purchase of twenty-three thousand acres in the State of New York, St Lawrence County, chosen by the directions of M. Necker, as advised, or approved, by Mr Morris. This bargain was likewise made with M. Leray. In his letter of instructions to Madame de Staël on this occasion, M. Necker says, 'Although my daughter has not experience in affairs, she has a native judgment, which will supply the want of it, and she is called to treat with a man of integrity, who will watch over my interests as over his own; and I do not hesitate to give her powers to arrange and finish this affair with M. Leray, and I consider whatever she shall do as if done by myself.' This transaction was four years before the death of M. Necker. Another purchase was afterwards made by Madame de Staël herself. M. Leray was the immediate agent in these concerns, but Mr Morris was consulted, as being a friend to the parties, possessing lands in the neighborhood of those of Madame de Staël, and well acquainted with their value and the

mode of improving this kind of property. Hence the correspondence, both of the father and daughter, with Mr Morris on this subject.

It was for a long time Madame de Staël's intention to visit the United States, and to establish one of her sons here in the charge of these lands. In her letters to Mr Morris, she often speaks of the voyage as in prospect, and soon to be performed. 'If I were only twenty-five years old,' said she, 'instead of thirty-five, I believe that I should come and see you.' To this Mr Morris replied, 'Then you think me fit only for the society of young ladies. Be persuaded, I beseech you, of the contrary. Believe, too, that the age of reason is that, which is suitable for travelling. Greater advantage is obtained from it, and less risk incurred. Building castles in the air is a diverting folly. Building them in the United States would be a ruinous folly. Labor is too expensive. But to set up a little summer establishment in a new country, which is rapidly advancing; to pass there from three to five months of the fine season; to remain four months more either at Philadelphia or New York; and to spend the remainder of the year in travelling; this I consider a mode of life by no means repugnant to common sense.' The next year she wrote as if her resolution was taken, and she would soon depart. In his answer Mr Morris says; 'I flatter myself, then, that next spring you will sail for America. For this purpose about the middle of April you can embark at Nantes with your son for New York. As soon as you arrive, you will come to Morrisania, partake what our dairy affords, and refresh yourself. In the beginning of July you shall set out to visit your lands, and the interior country; and return by the middle of September, to repose after your fatigues, to gather peaches, take walks, make verses, romances, in a word to do whatever you please. When my hermitage shall have lost its attractions, you shall establish yourself in the city, where, by the aid of a good cook, you will contrive to live very well. Here, as elsewhere, people amuse themselves with discussions, *bons mots*, slandering their

neighbors, and the like. Life is everywhere much the same in the long run. In all places the senses are of some account; the rest depends on the cast of mind, the view we take of things, the art of being occupied, and, finally, on friendship, whose sentiments endear our existence and banish *ennui*.'

About the same time Madame de Staël wrote also to M. Leray; 'I understand you have managed your lands with great skill, and that you have a fine establishment. I cannot imagine a more noble career than yours, and if I had not my European habits, I should delight to become an inmate at Leraysville. I should there find, I am sure, a most agreeable residence, and our friend Morris would bring back Paris to my recollections. Commend me to him, I pray you, and forget not the protection of friendship, which you have kindly afforded me, since I have been deprived of the protector, who honored and sustained my life. Adieu, my dear friend, we shall meet next year on the banks of some river.' But the meeting never took place. Madame de Staël's European attachments and pursuits threw perpetual obstacles in the way of her projected voyage, till declining health deprived her of the courage to meditate and the strength to execute such an enterprise. Her son formed other views, and after her death the lands were sold.

The following extract from a letter to Madame de Damas, dated December 1st, 1809, will give some insight into Mr Morris's habits of living and thinking at that time.

'Agreeably to your wish, we have talked of you much, we have thought of you still more, and sincerely wished, that you and yours were with us. We have not indeed the gayeties of Paris, nor the pleasures of France, but we breathe freely a wholesome air. You ask what is my situation, my health, and employment. I answer, that my establishment is pleasant, and though expensive, not beyond the means which I ought to possess, and which time will either bring or take away. My health is excellent, saving a little of the gout, which at this moment annoys me. I can walk three leagues, if the weather

be pleasant, and the road not rough. My employment is to labor for myself a little, for others more; to receive much company, and forget half those who come. I think of public affairs a little, read a little, play a little, and sleep a great deal. With good air, a good cook, fine water and wine, a good constitution, and a clear conscience, I descend gradually towards the grave, full of gratitude to the Giver of all good; and, beseeching him to grant to my fellow creatures what he has graciously and abundantly bestowed on me, I rely on providence as well for what remains here, as for what may happen hereafter.

'In answer to this letter tell me the same things of yourself, and it will add much to my felicity. Be persuaded, that, in spite of our feeble efforts and empty vows, events in this world, and in the thousands of worlds, which roll through the regions of space, will pursue the course marked out by Omnipotence. Every inferior intelligence, the greatest as well as the least, is but an instrument in his hand. How vain, then, the pride, the power, and the glory of man! How idle the care of those, who think they regulate the affairs of a little portion of the little planet, on which they chance to exist for a moment! How weak the wish to play a splendid part on this transient theatre, and how insensate the attempt to supplant those, who are buskined to terrify or amuse! Adieu.'

On the twenty-fifth of December, 1809, Mr Morris was married to Miss Anne Carey Randolph, a lady accomplished in mind and person, and belonging to one of the ancient and most respectable families in Virginia. To this connexion, although formed late in life, he often refers in his private correspondence, as a source of continued satisfaction and happiness. More than two years after his marriage, he wrote to his intimate friend, Mr John Parish, then at Bath in England; 'Perhaps some wind may yet waft you over the bosom of the Atlantic, and then you shall become acquainted with my wife, and you shall see that fortune—fortune? No,—the word befits not a sacred theme,—let me say the bounty of Him,

who has been to me unsparingly kind, gilds with a celestial beam the tranquil evening of my day.' On the sixth of July, 1816, he wrote again to Mr Parish as follows. 'I lead a quiet, and, more than most of my fellow mortals, a happy life. The woman, to whom I am married, has much genius, has been well educated, and possesses, with an affectionate temper, industry and a love of order. Our little boy grows finely, and is generally admired. The sentiments of a father, respecting an only child, render his opinions so liable to suspicion, that prudence should withhold them. You may, then, opening your mind's eye, behold your friend, as he descends with tottering steps the bottom of life's hill, supported by a kind companion, a tender female friend, and cheered by a little prattler, who bids fair, if God shall spare his life, to fill in due time the space his father leaves. He will, I trust, bequeath a portion larger than his heritage of wealth and fame. Nevertheless, looking back I can with some little self complacency reflect, that I have not lived in vain; and at the same time look forward with composure, at the probable course of future events. At sixty-four there is little to desire, and less to apprehend.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR MORRIS FIRST SUGGESTS THE IDEA OF THE CANAL BETWEEN LAKE ERIE AND THE HUDSON.—HIS SERVICES IN EFFECTING THAT WORK.—HIS DEATH.—SKETCH OF HIS CHARACTER BY MADAME DE DAMAS.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

We are now to consider Mr Morris's agency in originating the idea, and projecting the plan, of the Erie Canal. So much has been written on this subject, and so many rival claims to the honor and credit of first suggesting, or progressively effecting, this magnificent enterprise, have been put forward and tenaciously maintained, that it is almost invidious to single out a name from so worthy a list, as demanding a mark-

ed pre-eminence. It is comforting to reflect, however, that there is merit enough for them all, and that the awarding of his just share to one, need not detract from what may fairly belong to any or all of the others. The project of an improved water communication, between the Hudson and Lake Ontario, by way of the natural streams and the carrying places, for the advancement of the Indian trade, appears to have been thought of some time before the Revolution; but the splendid conception of connecting the vast waters of Erie, and the upper Lakes, with those of the Atlantic through the channel of the Hudson, is of more recent origin, and may undoubtedly be ascribed to Gouverneur Morris. It would, truly, be presumptuous to say, that no such thought ever crossed any person's mind, till it flashed upon his, yet, as far as testimony has weight, it is demonstrable, that he was the first to give shape and consistency to the thought, or make it known to the world. A few facts will be enough to establish this point.

In a letter to Dr Hosack, replying to certain queries respecting the Erie Canal, Mr Harmanus Bleecker writes as follows.

'Of the merit of the late Gouverneur Morris, in regard to the canals, I have a deep impression. I witnessed with great interest his zeal and intelligence, his efforts to inform others, and his elevation above the ignorance and prejudice, by which the project was condemned as premature and chimerical. You know, that he and Mr Clinton were deputed by the Canal Commissioners, to attend at the seat of the general government, for the purpose of procuring its aid. In the month of January, 1812, they appeared before a Committee of the House of Representatives, consisting of a member from each State, and Mr Morris made a grand and luminous exposition of his views, in relation to the Erie Canal, and several other similar projects in various parts of the United States.* It is

* Mr Bleecker was at that time in Washington, as a member of Congress from the State of New York.

grateful for me now to see how just and enlightened his views were, and to think how much he was in advance of those who doubted, those who were passive, and those who condemned and ridiculed what appeared clear to his discerning mind. What he then prophesied is now history.'

By a living witness it is proved, that Mr Morris, as early as the year 1777, promulgated his belief of the practicability of connecting, by an inland navigation, the great interior Lakes with the Hudson. Our readers will remember his mission in that year from the government of New York to General Schuyler's army, then at Fort Edward, retreating before General Burgoyne. He there met the associate of his boyhood, Mr Morgan Lewis, quartermaster in the northern army, since General Lewis, and Governor of New York. Their evenings were passed together, in company with General Schuyler and other officers. In a letter to Mr Bleecker, dated May twenty-sixth, 1828, General Lewis relates the following particulars in regard to those interviews.

'Mr Morris, whose temperament admitted of no alliance with despondency, even in the most gloomy periods of the war, with which our then situation might justly be classed, never doubting the ultimate triumph of our arms, and the consequent attainment of independence, frequently amused us by descanting with great energy on what he termed the "rising glories of the Western World." One evening, in particular, while describing in the most animated and glowing terms the rapid march of the useful arts through our country, when once freed from a foreign yoke; the spirit with which agriculture and commerce both external and internal would advance; the facilities which would be afforded them by the numerous water-courses, intersecting the country, and the ease by which they might be made to communicate; he announced, in language highly poetic, and to which I cannot do justice, that at no very distant day the waters of the great western inland seas would, by the aid of man, break through their barriers and mingle with those of the Hudson. I recollect asking him

how they were to break through these barriers. To which he replied, that numerous streams passed them through natural channels, and that artificial ones might be conducted by the same routes.'

There is a passage in his Diary, while he was travelling in Scotland, October, 1795, which furnishes a hint corroborative of these views. 'In my route I stopped twice to look at the canal, which crosses the Island here, and which this day, for the second time, I rode under. First I went to look at a succession of locks, which rise immediately after the canal has been carried over a river, and saw sufficiently, I think, their principle and construction. I admire much the execution in hewn stone, all in the best style. My second object was to see a number of vessels collected, and lading in the highest part of the canal, some brigs and sloops. On inquiry, I find that those, which draw only seven feet and a half of water, can go through. Also, that there are twenty locks, each of eight feet; so that the whole rise is one hundred and sixty feet. When I see this, my mind opens to a view of wealth for the interior of America, which hitherto I had rather conjectured than seen.' It is probable, that his idea of a canal for *vessels*, between the Hudson and Lake Erie, which he maintained for some time, was derived from this inspection of the Caledonian Canal.

But a more remarkable testimony is contained in his letter to Mr Parish, written in January, 1801, a few weeks after he had returned from a tour to Canada, and up the St Lawrence and Lake Ontario to Niagara Falls and Lake Erie.

'In turning a point of wood,' he writes, 'the Lake (Erie) broke on our view. I saw riding at anchor nine vessels, the least of them above a hundred tons. Can you bring your imagination to realize the scene? Does it not seem like magic? Yet this magic is but the early effort of victorious industry. Hundreds of large ships will, at no distant period, bound on the billows of these inland seas. At this point commences a navigation of more than a thousand miles. Shall I lead your astonishment up to the verge of incredulity? I

will. Know then that one tenth of the expense, borne by Britain in the last campaign, would enable ships to sail from London through Hudson's River *into Lake Erie*.'

Here is a declaration, as clear and positive as it could be made by language, that his view extended to a communication between the Hudson and *Lake Erie*, not by the route of Lake Ontario, but *direct*, for he speaks of a ship navigation, which it is by no means likely that even his fancy would have dreamed as practicable, through a canal around the Falls of Niagara.

This statement is also remarkably confirmed by a conversation, which took place between him and several other persons at a dinner party in Washington, not many days after the above letter to Mr Parish was written. The company consisted of gentlemen from different parts of the Union, and among them was Mr Robert Morris. The locality of the seat of government came under discussion, and various opinions were expressed. Mr Robert Morris at length called out, 'Gouverneur, what would they think, if we were *now* in Convention, and should propose to establish the seat of government at Newburgh on the Hudson?' Gouverneur Morris, apparently drawn out by this question, went into the subject, and remarked upon the many and great advantages, which would have resulted from such a location. He extolled its beautiful site, its central position, its accessibleness to the sea, and the ease with which it could be protected from the approach of an invading enemy. 'Yes,' said he, 'this would have been the place for the seat of government, and the members of Congress could have come from all parts by water.' 'Come by water, Mr Morris!' exclaimed the company, 'but how?'—'Why, by tapping Lake Erie, and bringing its waters to the Hudson.' 'How could you bring them?'—'By an inclined plane,' 'But that would be too expensive.' 'Well, then,' said he, 'there is a *water-table*, which can be found.'*

---

* Communicated by Mr S. De Witt Bloodgood, as obtained from Mr K. K. Van Rensselaer, who was present and heard the conversa-

Again, Mr Simeon De Witt, who, at the time to which he refers, had already been many years surveyor general of the state of New York, writes to Mr William Darby, 'The merit of first starting the idea of a *direct* communication between Lake Erie and Hudson River, unquestionably belongs to Gouverneur Morris. The first suggestion I had of it was from him. In 1803 I accidentally met him at Schenectady. We put up for the night at the same inn, and passed the evening together. Among the numerous topics of conversation, to which his prolific mind and discursive imagination gave birth, was that of improving the intercourse with the interior of our State. He then mentioned the project of *tapping Lake Erie*, as he expressed himself, and leading its waters in an artificial river directly across the country to Hudson River.' Mr Geddes, one of the principal surveyors and engineers of the Erie Canal, has declared, that these facts were communicated to him in 1804 by Mr De Witt, and that they were the first hints he had ever received of such a project. Mr Stephen Van Rensselaer, who was from the beginning one of the Canal Commissioners, says, in a letter recently written, 'I consider Mr Morris the father of our great canal, and every report and memorandum of his should be preserved for posterity, who will render to him the honor he merited.'†

---

tion. It may be observed in further explanation, that, in the Convention for forming the Constitution of the United States, Gouverneur Morris had prepared a proposition for establishing the seat of government at Newbugh, which he was dissuaded from presenting by Robert Morris, who thought it would lead to discussions unfavorable to harmony and union, by touching upon sectional interests, and stirring up local feelings.

† Much of the above testimony, and many other particulars relating to the same subject, may be found in Dr Hosack's valuable *Life of De Witt Clinton*;—in a pamphlet, entitled *Facts and Observations in Relation to the Origin and Completion of the Erie Canal*;---and in the compilation of the *Laws, Reports, and Official Documents on the Champlain and Erie Canals*, published at Albany, 1825, in two volumes.

Abundance of collateral evidence might be adduced, tending to the same point, but this is enough. We believe no person can read these statements, with a mind wholly unbiased, and not feel the force of a perfect conviction, that the idea of a canal from Lake Erie to Hudson River, by an interior route, was original with Mr Morris, and that he was the first to suggest it. These proofs are too strong, too direct, and too consistent, to admit of being parried or invalidated. If the whole could be traced to an insolated occurrence, or to the recollection of a single person, there might be room to suspect error or misapprehension. But as the evidence now comes before us, it is derived from different sources, fixed at different times and places, proceeding through channels having no relation to each other, and yet essentially confirming the same fact. It would be difficult to collect human testimony in a manner less exposed to uncertainty, or from its character demanding more implicit faith.

Mr Morris was chairman of the Canal Commissioners, from the time of their first appointment in March, 1810, till within a few months of his death. Within this period four reports were made on the subject to the legislature of New York, the three first of which were from his pen.* He also went with

---

* The fourth report was drafted by Mr Morris, but it was suppressed by the Commissioners, and another substituted in its place. Dr Hosack quotes remarks from the manuscripts of Thomas Eddy, one of the Commissioners, written in no very kindly spirit towards Mr Morris, and containing, besides, some errors of importance. Mr Morris was unable to meet the Commisioners in New York to consult on the report, and at their request the draft was sent to them. Mr Eddy says this was the draft of the '*third report*,' and moreover that it was returned to Mr Morris, after the Commissioners had read it, 'with respectful observations proposing amendments.' In the first place, it was the draft of the *fourth report* that was thus sent to the Commissioners; and, in the next place, it was never returned at all, nor has it since been found.

To show that Mr Eddy's impressions, in regard to Mr Morris at this time, were not exactly of the complexion, which might be supposed from the perusal of his notes, published by Dr Hosack, (*Life of Clinton*,

Mr Clinton on a special mission to Washington, for the purpose of obtaining aid from the United States towards the construction of the Erie Canal. The report detailing the particulars of this mission was written by him, as also the draft of a bill, intended for the adoption of Congress, granting lands for a magnificent system of inland navigation throughout the United States. The bill was never brought up, nor was the application to Congress attended with any success. There were too many divided intetests in that body, if there had not been other obstacles of perhaps greater moment, to permit them to legislate on so grand and comprehensive a scale, as that contemplated in Mr Morris's bill. The object was to provide for connecting the principal waters of the United States by canals, and to assign a proportionate quantity of new land to each State, as a fund for effecting these works within their respective limits.

During the six last years of Mr Morris's life, his thoughts and his time were incessantly occupied with this business of the Erie Canal, not more in discharging his duties as a commissioner to their full extent, than in devising preliminary and incidental means for advancing the enterprise. He sought

---

p. 271,) it will be enough to cite a passage from one of his letters. After the draft had been submitted to the Commissioners, Mr Morris thought he had reason to be dissatisfied with Mr Eddy's proceedings in the matter, and hinted this in a letter to them. Thereupon Mr Eddy wrote him an explanation, dated March 15th, 1816, at the conclu- of which he says;

'I most extremely regret, that my meaning and intentions should be so expressed, as to induce thee to suppose me capable of harboring sentiments the least disrespectful, or in any way showing a want of attachment to thee. I have received so many proofs of thy affectionate regard and kindness, that I cannot forbear endeavoring to do away from thy mind any unpleasant feelings towards me. I can only add, that my esteem for thee and my desire to retain thy friendship are not of a common kind, and that the warmest wish of my heart is, that thou mayest enjoy every blessing in this life, and everlasting happiness in the next. This is the sincere prayer of thy affectionate friend.'

knowledge from able and skilful engineers, from the results of long experiments in other countries, from the aids of science, and from personal observation. He examined minutely all the surveys, that were made from time to time, entered into complicated calculations on the motion, pressure, absorption, and evaporation of water, as depending on the quality of the soil and position of the canal route; he formed estimates, not less complicated and difficult, respecting the cost of excavations, embankments, aqueducts, and lockage; in short, there were no details, which he did not thoroughly investigate, and subject to the scrutiny of his judgment. His two first reports to the legislature are very able documents, indicating at the same time a profound knowledge of the subject, and an uncommon enlargement of mind and foresight. Mr Bleecker has well and truly observed, that 'what he then prophesied is now become history.' His remarks on the internal commerce of the United States, as connected with the Atlantic and with Canada, and as ultimately affecting our national improvement and prosperity, are the dictates of wisdom, the fruits of a laborious inquiry concerning the physical structure and resources of the country, and of a deep search into the causes, which carry forward the intercourse, growth, and refinement of society.

His original idea was that of a canal on an inclined plane, provided a uniform descent could be found, which he believed not improbable. By this plan the expense of locks, and the delay in passing through them, would be saved. Some other advantages he also supposed would attend it. But after the surveys were completed, he saw its impracticability, and abandoned his scheme. When he wrote his second report, he seems still to have harbored the belief, that sections of the canal might be constructed on that principle, and connected by locks at the necessary points. No doubt this was practicable, but the general opinion turned against its expediency. Those, who opposed the canal, either from ignorance, preju-

dice, interested motives, the spirit of party, or any other cause, raised a clamor about this unluckly suggestion of an inclined plane, which operated unfavorably to the Commissioners, and especially to Mr Morris, with whom it was known to have originated. But it was a clamor without any just grounds. The scheme was held out only while the surveys were going on, and no attempts were ever made or advised for putting it actually in execution. It was a subject of inquiry, and as such it contributed to waken public attention, elicit discussion, draw out facts, and excite interest. When the surveys were finished, the face of the country understood, and all requisite knowledge obtained, the notion of an inclined plane vanished from the mind even of its author, and there it ended.

In the midst of these useful labors for the public, and the busy pursuits of his private affairs, the earthly career of him, whom we have followed through the scenes of a varied and eventful life, was drawing fast to a close. His health had retained its usual vigor, assailed only by occasional attacks of his early and tenacious malady, the gout, till he was seized with a sudden illness, which proved mortal, and caused his death on the sixth of November, 1816, in the sixty-fifth year of his age. His faculties remained unimpaired to the last, and he was fully acquainted with the fatal tendency of his disorder, for several days previous to his dissolution. His mind was tranquil and collected. He conversed freely, sometimes cheerfully, with those around him, till he expired. His remains were interred on his own estate at Morrisania.*

In his person Mr Morris was tall, well proportioned, and of a commanding figure; his features oval, regular, handsome and

---

* The following is a copy of Gouverneur Morris's Will, made a short time before his death.

'I, Gouverneur Morris, declare this to be my last Will and Testament, of which I name my friend, Moss Kent, and my wife, Anne

expressive; his demeanor frank and dignified. His character has been sketched by Madame de Damas, a French lady, with so discriminating a hand, that some of the lineaments of her portrait may justly claim a place in these pages. Madame de Damas was intimately acquainted with Mr Morris, during his residence in France. She took refuge in his house at Sainport, at the time of the bloody horrors in the Capital, and was dragged from that sanctuary to prison, against the remonstrance of the American Minister, but was ultimately released. In her sketch of the character of a benefactor, some allowance should probably be made for the warmth of gratitude, and the range of fancy natural to a gifted female pen. But she de-

---

Carey Morris, Executor and Executrix, hereby giving my said Executor ten thousand dollars for his care and trouble in executing that office.

'*Item*, I confirm the ante-nuptial contract, by which I settled on my wife twenty-six hundred dollars a year; moreover, I give to her, during her life, my estate of Morrisania, with all the stock thereon, and also all my plate, furniture, and carriages; and it is further my will, that the improvement, which may become necessary, shall be made at the expense of my estate; and, in case my wife should marry, I give her six hundred dollars more per annum, to defray the increased expenditure, which may attend that connexion.

'*Item*, I give to my son, Gouverneur Morris, the whole of my estate, saving and excepting such bequests, as may be in this my will, and such as I may hereafter think proper to make. If it should please God to take him away, before he arrives at full age, or afterwards, not having made a will, I then give my estate to such one or more of the male descendants of my brothers and sisters, and in such proportions, as my wife shall designate; but in case she shall have made no such designation, I then give my estate to Lewis Morris Wilkins, son of my sister Isabella, on condition, that he drop the name of Wilkins, and bear the name and arms of Morris.

'*Item*, I give to my nephew, Gouverneur Wilkins, twenty-five thousand dollars, to be paid to him when he shall have arrived to the age of thirty, provided his conduct shall be, in the opinion of my Executor and Executrix, such as becomes a good citizen.

'In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this twenty-sixth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and sixteen.'

scribes impressions, the result of a close and continued observation, and in their spirit they are doubtless correct.

'I attempt to delineate the character of a man,' says Madame de Damas, 'who so little resembles other men, that one should hardly say anything of him, which has already been said of them. Like others, however, he has virtues, defects, and talents, but their nature, their use, mixture, and results, form a whole entirely different from anything I have seen. Were I called upon to distinguish him by a single trait, I should say, *he is good.* They, who do not well understand the meaning of these words, may not be satisfied; but as for me, who include much in the term *goodness*, and who have seen the exercise of this virtue in every action of Mr Morris's life, I repeat, that it is this, which gives him the first place in all honest hearts, and entitles him to their lasting admiration and gratitude. The love of order is his strongest passion, the rule of all his acts, the aim of all he utters. A true philanthropist by the natural impulse of his soul, he considers every object under the possibility of its becoming useful. His penetrating, elevated, quick, and luminous mind, is never idle, and he constantly employs his numerous and diversified attainments, either in doing good, or inspiring in others the love of goodness. I have never known a person to approach Mr Morris, whatever might be his intentions, circumstances, or situation, who did not on leaving him find himself enriched by his gifts, or enlightened by his counsels; who did not feel grateful for some soothing consolations, a profitable hint, or a kind reception.

'He is charged with some faults by his friends. So much enlargement of soul may not be compatible with a quick sensibility, yet one cannot help regretting, that reason and wisdom should assume a control so powerful over his feelings. Brought up with the almost rustic freedom of a republican country, he is remarkable for great simplicity of manners, sustained by a nobleness, which has its seat in his soul, but tinged with a slight shade of self complacency. If I eulogize him, it is only because I attempt to draw his true portrait, and I

seek not to weaken defects, which, after all, may be no other than qualities little in fashion with us. We call him self complacent, because it is our custom to expect, that every one will abase himself to procure elevation, and that merit shall wait for its place to be assigned, instead of taking it. Mr Morris knows his proper station, and assumes it; sacrificing no person to himself in secret design, and in reality sacrificing himself to no other; thus, inattentive to the petty tokens of complaisance, which self-love dictates in our social intercourse, he sometimes offends those, who expect and demand them. He is fond of his ease, does his best to procure it, and enjoys it as much as possible. He loves good cheer, good wine, good company. His senses, as well as his mind, have a high relish of perfection, and strive to attain it. He never eats a bad dinner, without a severe censure upon the cook, as he never listens to folly without a keen rebuke. A little dissimulation would save him from many harmless enemies, who are not more to be regarded, however, than the small faults, which excite their enmity; but every species of deception, from whatever motive, is incompatible with the elevation, integrity, and frankness of the man, whom I delineate.

'One of his most remarkable, and, if I may so say, one of his fundamental qualities, is his regard for truth, so constant, so absolute, so scrupulous, that it might seem carried to an exaggeration, were it not for the importance of its principle. Never, under any circumstances, in the excitement of an animated story, or in the lively flow of pleasantry, does a word escape him, not a single word, that is not strictly conformable to truth. He has no conception of the pliancy of truth; he yields to her on all occasions, because nothing is more beautiful in his eyes than truth; and because, also, a mind so much enlightened by her rays, so capable of discovering her charms and extending her reign, is naturally inclined to uphold and defend her.

'At the same time, how superior is he to that puerile vanity, which pretends to know all things, and to that fear of

seeming ignorant, which aims to display universal intelligence. He asserts a fact, and shows without ostentation, that it cannot be doubted; again, in the same tone, he confesses his ignorance, when he is as well informed perhaps as most men on the subject. No wonder, then, that he should bear with an ill grace a doubt, or an objection, in regard to what he delivers as the result of his settled conviction. He knows his own powers, and, perceiving that his mind runs far ahead of his antagonist, he will condemn him as presumptuous, before he refutes him as absurd. His refutation is made in few words, so clear, so concise, so evident, that commonly it is impossible to reply. But, alas! the pleasure of being enlightened rarely heals the wounds of defeat.

'If, instead of a simple error, an opinion is ventured in his presence offensive to religion, good morals, or sound political principles, it is no longer a regard for truth alone, it is the passion of virtue, the ardor of justice, the love of humanity, which inflame his generous soul. His language, always correct and nervous, in whatever tongue he speaks, becomes eloquent, animated, vehement; he resists a false principle with as much pertinacity, as the crimes to which it leads; he attacks and beats down that immorality, which is destructive of the order he loves and maintains; he combats every sophism dangerous to society, with the same warmth of feeling, the same power of argument, which have directed his meditations to the happiness of man, and given him so much zeal, and so many facilities, for aiding to secure on a solid basis the lasting prosperity of his country.

'Superficial observers, and they are numerous, might be acquainted with Mr Morris for years, without discovering his most eminent qualities. Such observers must be told what to admire. They will never perceive greatness in things performed without boast and without effort. They regard Mr Morris as a profound politician, the most amiable and the most gifted of men, and this is truly no feeble eulogium, but nothing really worthy of him will be said by any one, who does not as-

cend to the source of all that is great and excellent in his character. The idea of a Deity always present, the habit of contemplating him in his works, of imitating his goodness, of submitting to his will with that calm resignation, which arises from a belief that God can will nothing but what is good; such is the fountain from which his soul derives a confidence full of serenity, a boundless charity, and a hope, which he regards both as a homage and a duty, and which in him seems to derive unceasing light from some benignant star, that brightens his whole happy disposition. Ever at peace with himself, ever attentive to the great laws of the universe, seldom ruffled in his temper, not suffering men or events to have a mastery over his spirit, he is habitually serene, alike ready to engage in the most abstruse inquiries, or to join in the trifles of social amusement. His imagination inclines to pleasantry, and being abundantly gifted with what the English call *humor*, united to what the French name *esprit*, it is impossible not to be delighted by his ingenious combinations, the originality of his ideas, the flashes of his colloquial wit, and the good taste and natural cheerfulness, which pervade and embellish whatever he says. Though ridicule sometimes provokes his satirical mirth, he never extends it to vice; this would be showing it a sort of concession; but he hates vice, he glows with an honest indignation at its sight, he would sooner punish than ridicule it.

'He has a fine and disciplined taste for poetry, and is himself a poet; but it is by mere chance that he recites any of his verses, and he has published nothing in that way. His insatiable memory retains everything. Shakspeare, Pope, Dryden, Milton, have composed nothing beautiful, which is not known to him; and, indeed, the poetical temperament is visible in his whole conversation. The melodious tones of his voice, the variety and justness of its inflexions, the grace and energy of his utterance, produce such an agreeable illusion, that I have often sought in vain for that, which had so much enchanted me

in the book he had been reading; it scarcely contained the same ideas; the words wanted the melody and the music.

'A characteristic trait, which I must not forget, is his faculty and habit of applying his mind to a single object, of suddenly collecting the whole force of his attention upon one point. It is in this manner, that he learns nothing imperfectly; that all his ideas are simple, fixed, complete; that when he converses upon any subject, it would seem as if his thoughts have always been occupied upon that alone. How often have I seen persons, of different conditions and professions, felicitate themselves on having consulted him on a point, which they considered precisely the one in which he was best informed. Nature treats only her favorites with such a liberality of means.

'I will yet follow Mr Morris for a moment into the retired life of rural solitude, where he is still more at home, and happier. Solitude, did I say? Ah, no, for nowhere is he more surrounded, nowhere more beneficent, occupied, active, prodigal of his manifold acquirements, nowhere does he labor more or enjoy more. Agriculture becomes the chief science of the legislator; not content with simply honoring and encouraging it, he applies to it his closest attention and devoted study, and employs in it the discoveries of art. He has neglected none of its branches; he manages a farm with the same talent, and with more pleasure, than he presides in the councils of state. He combines practice and theory, and is a stranger to none of the details. The names and qualities of grains, trees, and plants; the divers kinds of culture adapted to each; the preparation of soils, choice of positions, observation of the seasons, the manner of counteracting their vicissitudes, the means of hastening and multiplying products, and of varying them so as to preserve the fertility of the soil without exhaustion; in one word, from the greatest labors of the harvest, to the attentions required by the poorest vegetable, nothing escapes his notice and care; more happy in providing for the increase of a crop, than in tracing plans by which battles are to be gained; and as con-

tented in the midst of the rude peasantry at Sainport, whom he instructs and assists, as he ever has been in the brilliant circles of Versailles and of Paris.

'Sometimes when I had supposed him engaged in deep thoughts on the great principles of social organization, or imparting to his government new lights respecting the political state of Europe, I have found that he had spent the morning in superintending his tillage, in sowing seeds, or assisting in the harvest; alike simple, useful, and great, whether acting a part in the revolutionary struggles of his country, or enjoying life in his tranquil retirement at Sainport; alike active in doing as much good as possible, and in obeying that noble precept of Marcus Aurelius, "not to leave any interval between one good action and another." A legislator in the New World, an Ambassador in France, everywhere a man of genius, possessing a wise and enlightened mind, a faithful, fearless, and unchangeable friend, an indulgent and liberal master, an amiable and social companion, a support to the feeble, the resource of the indigent, the vindicator of justice, he is the model and the object of love to all good men.

'As he always appears in his true character, without concealment or hypocrisy, I may observe, that he puts a value on all the conveniences, comforts, and pleasures of life, the advantages of fortune, the enjoyments of the arts, and the charms of society. He conceives it to be following the order of Providence to enjoy all its gifts. "To enjoy is to obey." And upon the same principle he submits, with a modest fortitude, and sincere resignation, to the ills inflicted by the same hand. But where should I stop, if I were to reveal all the delicate, generous, and magnanimous acts, which I have witnessed, and the disclosure of which he would never forgive? This portrait is perhaps already too long, if compared with other portraits. But with what man is he to be compared, whom I describe? In this kind of composition, some writers seek to force admiration by surprise, while others, with a blaze of splendid qualities, would conceal defects not less striking; but I could

never do justice to Mr Morris, except by representing him as he is, in the accordance of his principles and his virtues. Some write, also, to gain applause for themselves, but I have only poured out the overflowings of a heart filled with esteem, veneration, and gratitude.'

This picture is highly colored, and in the strain of French panegyric, but it is drawn with a skilful hand, and the features, though glaring, are unquestionably characteristic and in the outline true. The manuscript, from which the above sketches have been translated, bears the date of May, 1795, the year following that of Mr Morris's leaving France. About four years afterwards, when he had returned to America, the portrait was sent to him by the fair authoress herself, at the request, as she says, of a mutual friend. It seems proper to insert here, also, an extract from the letter accompanying it, which was written in English, and which shows, that Madame de Damas's talent for good writing was not confined to exhibitions of it in her native tongue.

'I enclose a *character*,' she says 'written long since, and which falls so short of my opinion of the original, that I should not have offered it to your perusal, if J. had not earnestly required it, as a part of that implicit confidence, that follows true friendship. Whatever you may think of that imperfect sketch, a paragraph of it I shall particularly insist upon. You have allowed me to write with the affectionate freedom of a friend ; do not call me bold, or ridiculous, if I pretend to give, as I often beg, advice. I am a real friend, proud of the title, and I only aim at acting up to it. As such, I will go on to urge a subject rather delicate, but in which some part of your happiness may be concerned. That point of view gives me courage to proceed.

'This character contains but a few of the many eminent qualities, God was pleased to lavish on you, but one slight fault I could not help mentioning, and I require your serious attention to the part marked with a cross. That cross I have traced with a pencil, that it may be easily rubbed off, as I

trust that little blemish will soon be removed, if you think it worth your while to set about it. People of weak minds, and many they are, feel the more shocked, at being told of their inferiority, as they cannot help being sensible of it, and the complaints of a crowd, though consisting of fools, are often hurtful to the wise. Mistake me not ; I do not suspect your intention is to mortify any body's pride ; I only remark that you do it, though unwillingly. A point I would earnestly wish you to observe in your conduct is, *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.* True greatness is generous, and your benevolent soul must be used to indulge faults you are free from ; it is your delight to assuage or relieve miseries ; there is one I recommend to your notice. Such condescension is not inconsistent with dignity, nor is it more, in many cases, than to suffer a silly creature to say silly things, without expressing your cutting contempt and disapprobation. By so doing, you do not correct one, and you irritate thousands, who certainly will not allow the rebuke to be merited, and will spread their discontent at the manner it was delivered. But I grow as tedious as I am impertinent, and should tear this to pieces, were I not persuaded your friendship will forgive what mine has dictated. At all events, I offer you a fair opportunity to display the kindness I recommend, and to prove yourself the most indulgent of men, as perhaps you will think me the pertest of women.'

These are broad hints at a prevailing defect in Mr Morris's manners, which, it is believed, neither the counsels, almost admonitions, of his friend, nor the weight of his own reflections, contributed to remove or diminish. It was an inborn weakness, which could only be eradicated by a change of nature. His acute powers of mind, a thorough consciousness of his own strength, and his quick sense of the ridiculous, joined to a lofty independence of thought, often betrayed him into a forwardness of manner, a license of expression, and an indulgence of his humor, little suited to soothe the pride, or flatter the vanity, or foster the self-love, or win the esteem of those about him. He might dazzle by his genius, surprise by his

novel flights of fancy, amuse by his wit, and confound by his arguments, and thus extort the tribute of admiration, but fai in gaining the willing applause of love. No man was better acquainted with the forms and etiquette of society, none had moved more widely in the circles of fashion and rank, or examined with a keener scrutiny the deep fountains of the human passions, or knew better how to touch the springs of men's motives, yet this rare intuition, this more rare experience, and this great knowledge, did little towards modifying the tendencies of his nature, or diverting the first bent of his mind. He was sometimes overbearing in conversation. At any rate, when he spoke, he expected to be heard. There is an anecdote illustrative of this point. At a breakfast table he was in close conversation with a gentleman, to whose harangue he had listened patiently, till it was his turn to reply. He began accordingly, but the gentleman was inattentive, and a bad listener. 'Sir,' said Mr Morris, 'if you will not attend to my argument, I will address myself to the tea-pot,' and went on with much animation of tone and gesture, making the tea-pot the representative of his opponent, till he had finished his replication.

But this defect, after all, was only a spot on the surface. It did not penetrate the substance, nor taint any interior feeling. It was in fact no more than the excess of some of the higher qualities, not duly balanced by others, which are little valued or esteemed. It was independence, frankness, self respect, without the usual mixture of cautious reserve, forbearance, and timidity. It was boldness without hypocrisy, confidence without fear, and dignity without dissimulation. It did not touch the heart. The noble and generous virtues bloomed luxuriantly, and bore rich and abundant fruit. It marred no principle. Justice, truth, charity, integrity, honor, held an uncontrolled empire in his soul, and never lost their influence or authority.

In his style of living he was fond of a display, which might perhaps be called luxury, and, in his travelling excursions, his

preparations for ease and comfort, particularly for the enjoyments of the table, commonly attracted notice. But in this there were no extremes nor extravagances, no ostentatious parade of wealth or grandeur. He had formed a plan of life, which he deemed suitable to his disposition, and within his means of attainment, embracing all that could gratify reasonable desires, and fill up an adequate measure of happiness. This plan he pursued methodically, and with a philosophical temperament, contented that his wishes were realized and his object gained. Although his expenses were on a liberal scale, they were uniform, and his habits of economy were rigid and exact. While in Europe he kept a daily record of his expenditures, noting down each day in a small book, kept for the purpose, every item of expense, even for the most trifling article. Some persons have wondered how he accumulated his property, but whoever will pursue him through the details of his affairs, and observe with what minute attention and unwearied industry he devoted himself to business, and the multiplied and extensive operations in which he was concerned for many years, will wonder no longer. His financial skill, his talents and knowledge of the world, combined with his uncommon opportunities, his power of application, his principles and practice of economy, are enough, and more than enough, to explain all the mystery that could hang over that subject, if it needed any explanation. There are many volumes of letter books on matters of business, and wholly in his own hand-writing, which unfold a series of enterprises, commercial schemes and transactions in various countries, and from which may be gathered a detailed history of the sources of his wealth, and the progress of its acquisition.

But the chief basis of Mr Morris's property was his successful speculations in new lands, continued for a long term of years. Under favorable circumstances, and at a time when these lands bore a low price, he made large purchases, and the rapid increase of their value produced great and accumulating profits upon the first investments. His foresight,

knowledge of affairs, and judicious management, promoted his good fortune, and enabled him to escape the disasters, which befel too many, who entered inconsiderately and deeply into land speculations.

The examples already cited in this memoir bear testimony to his noble spirit of generosity. Others might be adduced, which, if less extensive, are not less creditable. 'He had always a great aversion,' says a gentleman who knew him well, 'to speak of his own affairs, except to those whom they immediately concerned, and when he rendered a service to any one, he kept it still more secret.' His situation in France exposed him to numerous calls on the exercise of this virtue. Many, who had been his friends, were deprived of their property, and thrown into prison, or, equally destitute, were compelled to leave their country, and depend on the bounty of strangers. Among those, not a few were relieved by his liberality. To a lady of rank, who, as an emigrant from France, had lost everything, and taken refuge in Berlin, he sent fifty louis d'ors, saying to her in the letter enclosing the money; 'Should fortune be propitious, you can return the amount, but, if not, allow me the consolation of believing, that I have soothed for one moment your afflictions.' Besides the instances of this kind, the notes of acknowledgment and gratitude, written by various persons in distress, prove the frequency of his acts of kindness, the sincerity of his friendship, and the diffusive warmth of his benevolence.

As a politician, Mr Morris will of course be judged differently by different persons, according to the origin of their impressions, and the bias of their sentiments. The decided tone of his opinions, and the deep tinge of party, which they imbibed, in common with those of all his countrymen, on one side or the other, at a time of great national excitement, will prevent their being viewed, for the present at least, with perfect impartiality. But his strong attachment to his country, and desire to advance its highest honor and best interests, the constancy of his efforts to this end, and the rectitude of his

purposes, will never be doubted nor undervalued. No man ever acted less from the influence of selfish aims, or with more freedom from disguise, or a more fearless independence. Near the close of his life, he lamented the heats and divisions, which had inflamed the minds of men, and endangered the internal peace and safety of the nation. 'Let us forget party,' said he, 'and think of our country. That country embraces both parties. We must endeavor, therefore, to serve and benefit both. This cannot be effected, while political delusions array good men against each other.' These are the counsels of wisdom and experience, the dictates of patriotism, and consistent with the uniform principles of their author. Regard him as we may, the name of Mr Morris must ever hold an elevated place on the list of those, whom their country will delight to honor for their talents, and as the patriots by whose services and virtues its freedom has been achieved, and its glory established.

PUBLICATIONS,

BY GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

1. Observations on the American Revolution. Published according to a Resolution of Congress, by their Committee, for the Consideration of those, who are desirous of comparing the Conduct of the opposed Parties, and the several Consequences which have flowed from it. Philadelphia, 1779. pp. 122.

   This pamphlet was also published entire in Almon's *Remembrancer*, London, for the same year.

2. Essays on the Finance, Currency, and Internal Trade of the United States, published in the Pennsylvania Packet, 1780.

   Published anonymously, addressed to 'The Inhabitants of America,' and signed AN AMERICAN. They are able, and afford important materials relating to the history of the time.

3. An Address to the Assembly of Pennsylvania, on the Abolition of the Bank of North America. Philadelphia, 1785.

   Written with much care and ability.

4. An Oration on the Death of General Washington, delivered at the Request of the Corporation of the City of New York, on the 31st of December, 1799.

5. An Oration at the Funeral of Alexander Hamilton, July 14th, 1804.

   Pronounced extempore, and written out afterwards from notes taken down by a person present.

6. An Answer to War in Disguise; or Remarks upon the New Doctrine of England, concerning Neutral Trade. New York, 1806. pp. 76.

   This was in reply to a pamphlet written in England, entitled 'War in Disguise, or the Frauds of Neutral Flags.' Mr Madison also wrote an answer to the same work, in which he discussed at large the subject of Neutral Trade.

7. Speeches in the Senate of the United States, 1801—3.
   Those on the repeal of the internal Taxes, the Judiciary question, and Ross's Resolutions, were published in a separate form.
8. Notes on the United States of America. Philadelphia, 1806. pp. 48.
   First written in a letter to a friend, and afterwards printed for circulation.
9. An Address to the People of the State of New York. 1809. pp. 16.
   Signed by the Chairman of a meeting of the Federalists in the Legislature of New York, but written by Mr Morris.
10. An Oration, delivered on the 19th of May, 1812, in Honor of the Memory of George Clinton, late Vice President of the United States. pp. 18.
11. A Discourse delivered before the New York Historical Society, at their Anniversary Meeting, December 6th, 1812. pp. 40.
    Contained also in the second volume of the Society's *Collections*.
12. An Oration delivered July 5th, 1813, before the Washington Benevolent Society of the City of New York, in Commemoration of American Independence. pp. 27.
13. An Oration delivered on the 29th of June, 1814, at the Request of a Number of Citizens of New York, in Celebration of the Deliverance of Europe from the Yoke of Military Despotism. pp. 23.
14. An Inaugural Discourse, delivered before the New York Historical Society, September 4th, 1816. pp. 24.
    Occasioned by the author's having been chosen President of the Society.
15. Reports and other Papers respecting the Erie Canal, 1810 to 1816.
    Printed separately as they appeared, but they are all contained in a work entitled, 'Laws of the State of New York, in relation to the Erie and Champlain Canals.'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

[redacted]
PORTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

B MORRIS, G.
Sparks, Jared
Life of Gouverneur Morris with selections from his correspondence and miscellaneous papers; detailing events in the American

DEC 0 8 1988

DATE DUE

[redacted]
PORTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
PORTLAND, ME 04101